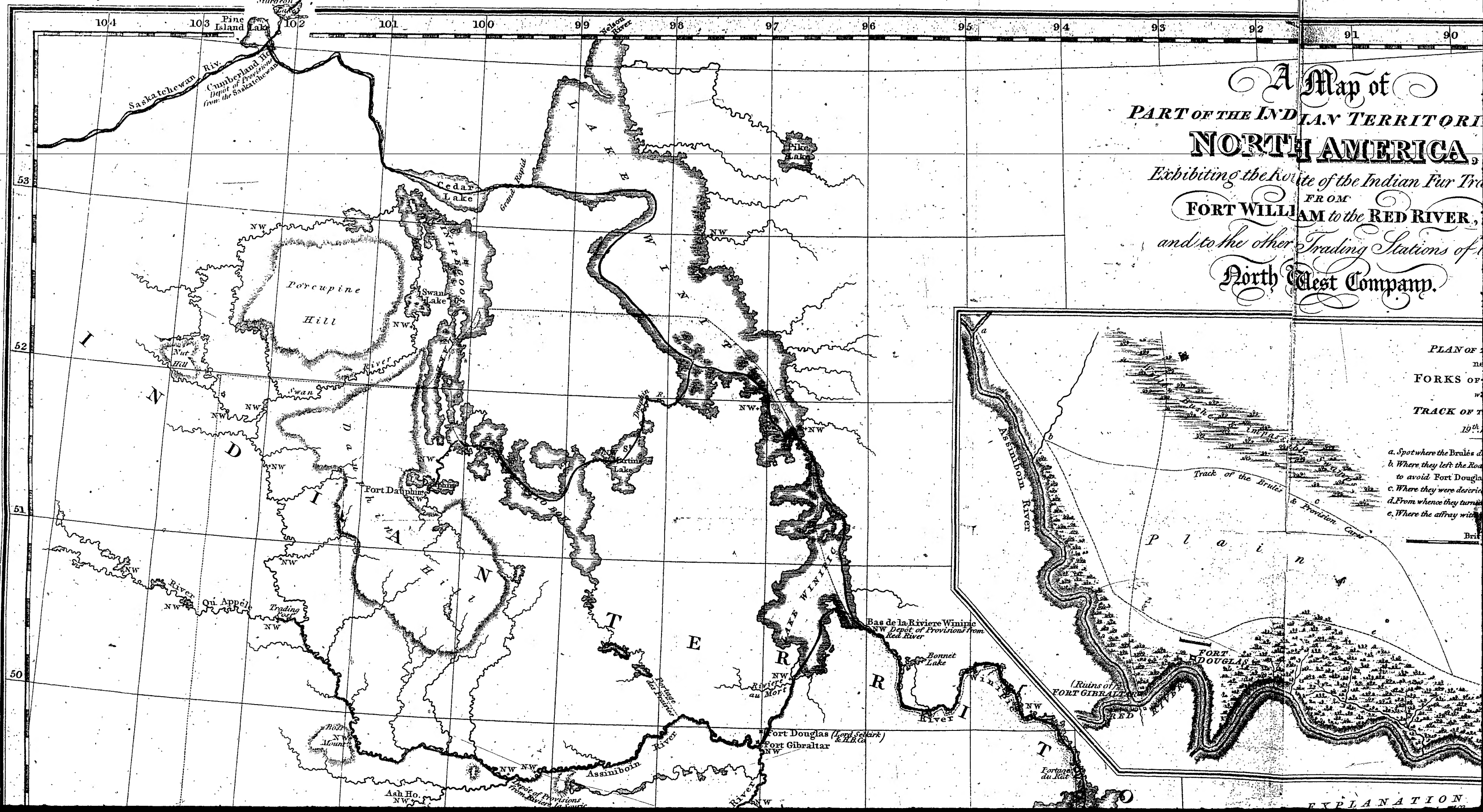


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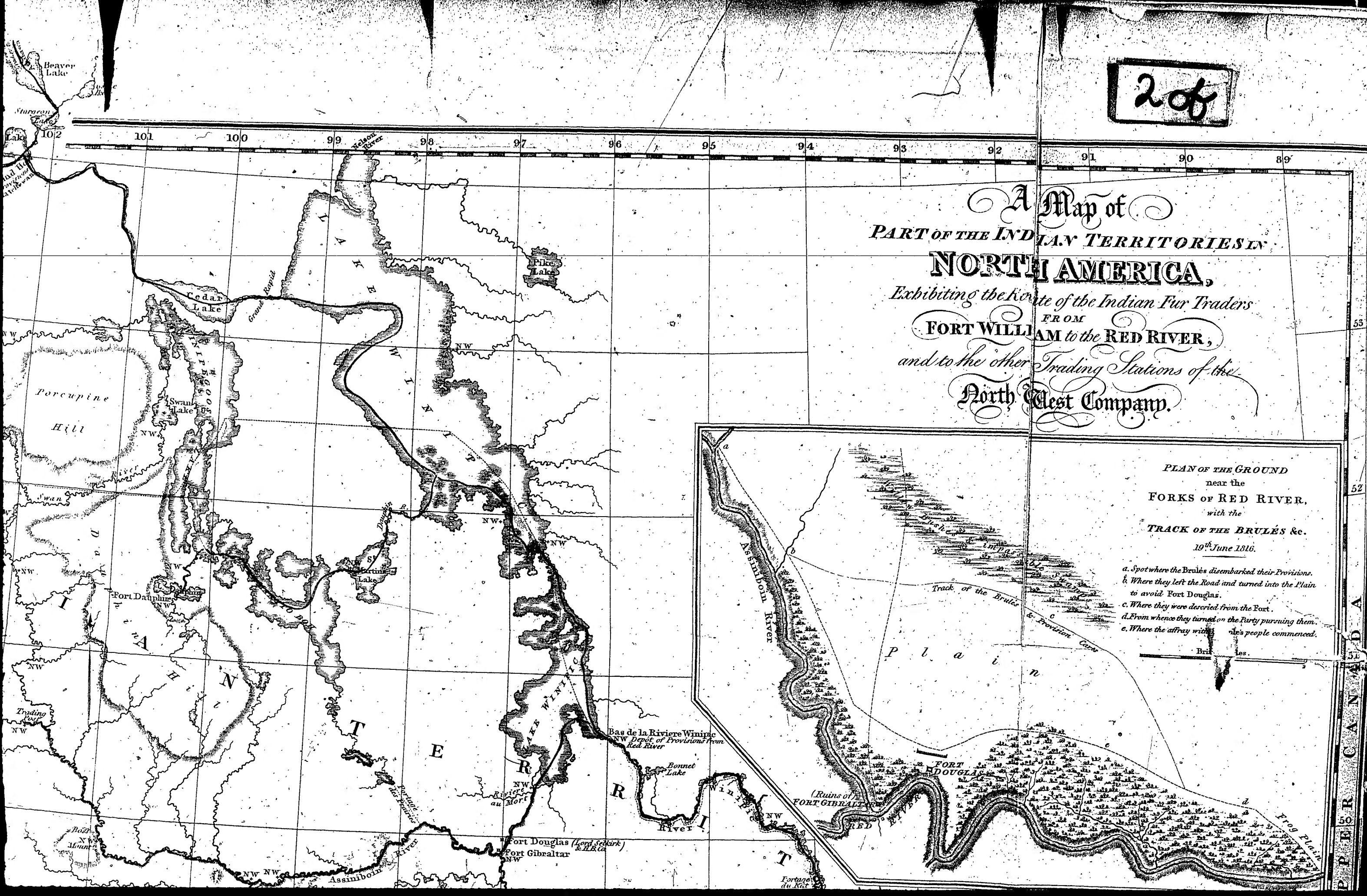
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A Map of  
PART OF THE INDIAN TERRITORIES IN  
**NORTH AMERICA,**  
*Exhibiting the Route of the Indian Fur Traders*  
FROM  
**FORT WILLIAM to the RED RIVER,**  
*and to the other Trading Stations of the*  
**North West Company.**

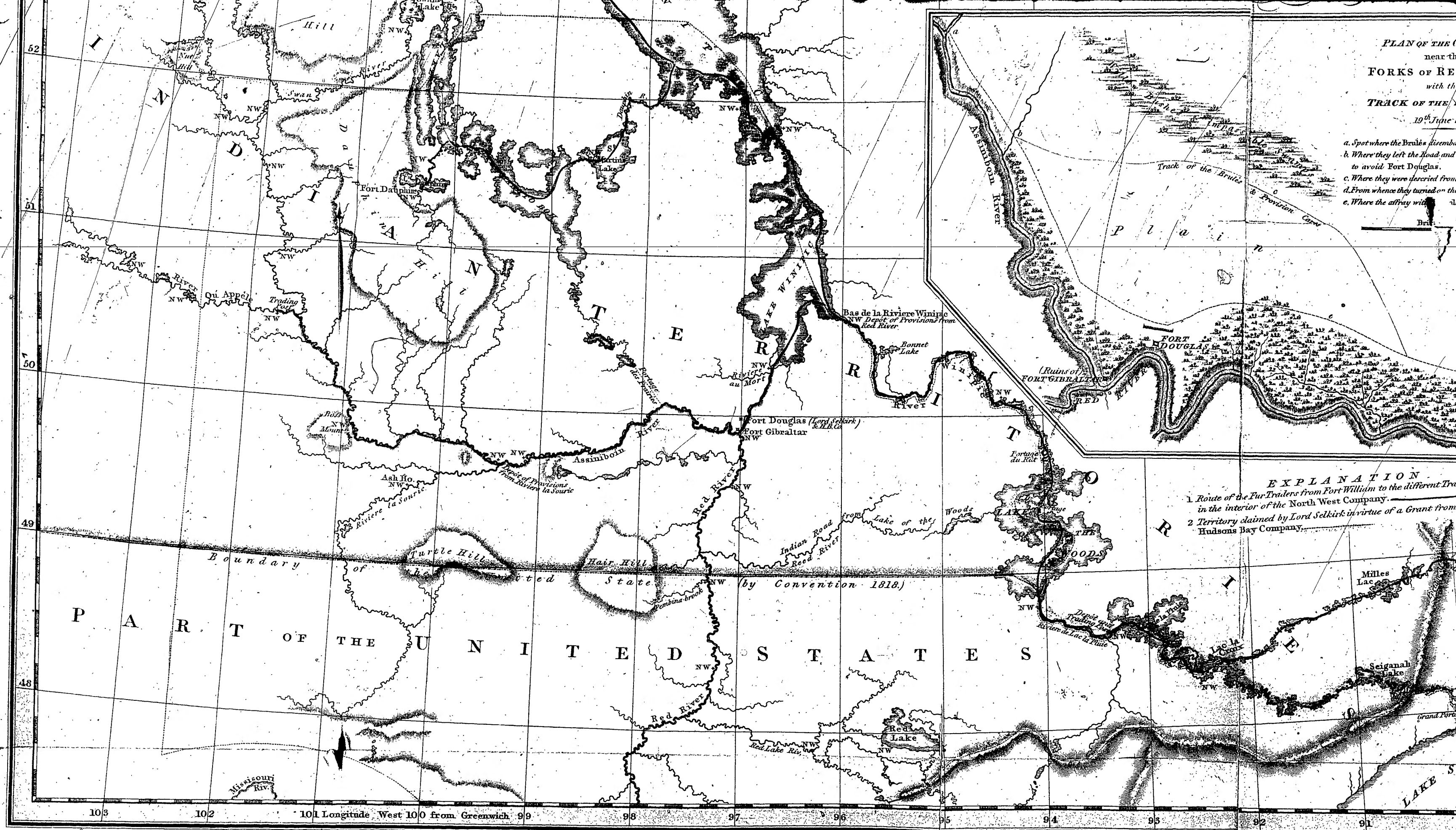
PLAN OF THE GROUND  
near the  
FORKS OF RED RIVER,  
with the  
TRACK OF THE BRULÉS &c.  
19<sup>th</sup> June 1816.

- a. Spot where the Brulés disembarked their Provisions.
- b. Where they left the Road and turned into the Plain to avoid Fort Douglas.
- c. Where they were deserted from the Fort.
- d. From whence they turned on the Party pursuing them.
- e. Where the affray with the people commenced.

British Miles





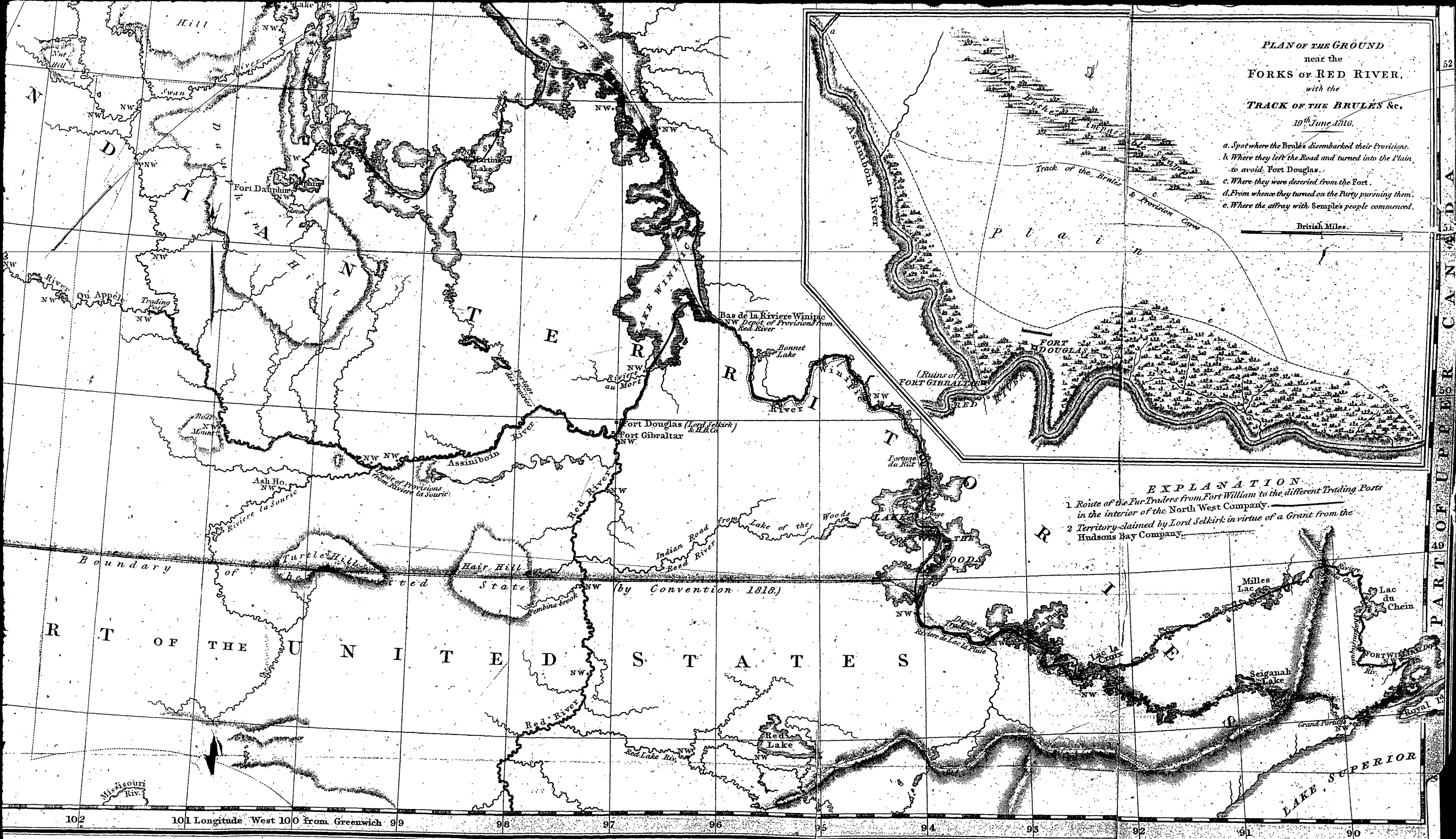


PLAN OF THE  
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19<sup>th</sup> June

- a. Spot where the Brûlés disembarked
- b. Where they left the Road and to avoid Fort Douglas.
- c. Where they were recovered from
- d. From whence they turned on the
- e. Where the affray with

**EXPLANATION**  
1. Route of the Fur Traders from Fort William to the different Trails in the interior of the North West Company.  
2. Territory claimed by Lord Selkirk in virtue of a Grant from the Hudsons Bay Company.

308



PLAN OF THE GROUND  
near the  
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with the  
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19<sup>th</sup> June 1816.

- a. Spot where the Brulés disembarked their Provisions.
- b. Where they left the Road and turned into the Plain to avoid Fort Douglas.
- c. Where they were deserted from the Fort.
- d. From whence they turned on the Party pursuing them.
- e. Where the affray with Semple's people commenced.

British Miles.

- EXPLANATION
- 1 Route of the Fur Traders from Fort William to the different Trading Posts in the interior of the North West Company.
  - 2 Territory claimed by Lord Selkirk in virtue of a Grant from the Hudsons Bay Company.

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A  
NARRATIVE  
OF  
TRANSACTIONS  
IN THE  
RED RIVER COUNTRY;

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FROM THE  
COMMENCEMENT OF THE OPERATIONS  
OF  
THE EARL OF SELKIRK,  
TILL THE SUMMER OF THE YEAR 1816.

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BY  
ALEXANDER M'DONELL, ESQ.

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WITH A MAP,

EXHIBITING  
PART OF THE ROUTE OF THE CANADIAN FUR TRADERS IN THE  
INTERIOR OF NORTH AMERICA,

And comprising the Scene of Contest between Lord Selkirk and the North-West Company.

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LONDON:

PRINTED BY B. M'MILLAN, BOW-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN,

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1819.

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## PREFACE.

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IN the year 1817, the Agents of the North-West Company considered it a duty imposed upon them, in consequence of certain *ex parte* statements of the Earl of Selkirk and his adherents, to publish a Narrative of Occurrences in the Indian Countries of North America, from the period of the connection of his Lordship with the Hudson's Bay Company, and his attempt to establish a Colony on the Red River. Since that publication, the serious and alarming charges preferred by the Earl of Selkirk against some of the Partners and Servants of the North-West Company, have undergone, before the competent Tribunals of Criminal Jurisprudence in Canada, the fullest judicial investigation; and a verdict of Acquittal, has been the recorded refutation given to the imputations of Murder and Robbery, which constituted such prominent features in the distorted statements of Lord Selkirk. These Trials have

been published in this Country, from the shorthand notes of a sworn Law Reporter, and they will furnish to every unprejudiced mind, a clear and satisfactory contradiction to that tissue of calumny, misrepresentation, and fabrication, with which the *ex parte* publications alluded to abound.

And though the Press has teemed with productions of a similar character, proceeding either from his Lordship, or his partizans, the Representatives of the North-West Company had determined to abstain from any pamphlet hostility, partly from a respectful deference to the decision of the House of Commons, which, shortly before the termination of the last Session of Parliament, had been pleased to order that certain Official Documents, materially connected with this question, should be printed, and consequently distributed to its Members; and partly from an unceasing conviction, that the more frequently these occurrences are investigated, the more satisfactorily will be established the authentic and faithful character of the Narrative published in 1817; a character



to which it has already proved its title by the result of the Trials in Canada, in October last.

Such was the determination of the Agents of the North-West Company, when a Narrative of the Transactions in the Red River Country, since the commencement of Lord Selkirk's Establishment, written by Alexander M'Donell, the Partner of that proprietary more immediately concerned in them, reached their hands. As Mr. M'Donell is the person against whom the calumnious libels on this subject have been more directly levelled, they consider it a duty they owe to him, to make his statement an exception to their previous determination, by publishing in his absence, the Defence he has to offer to the Charges brought against him; and which Charges are best answered, in his clear explanation of the conduct he was compelled to adopt for the protection of the concerns entrusted to his care, under circumstances of peculiar difficulty, and in emergencies where the necessity of instant decision, imposed upon him by the aggressions of his Accuser, almost precluded deliberation.

That prejudices had been excited in the minds

of honorable and enlightened men in this country, against the North-West Company, by these solemn denunciations of Lord Selkirk, was with their representatives more a subject of deep regret, than of surprise. It was impossible that charges of atrocity so unblushingly made, and so sedulously circulated, against absent persons, individually unknown in this country, (particularly when it was notorious that British lives had in these disputes been lost), should not have produced a considerable impression. When the honor and the reputation of a British Nobleman were, in addition, staked to the truth and accuracy of these denunciations, the most deliberate and impartial mind, may be excused in allowing itself, under such an influence, to be prepossessed by *ex parte* statements! But happily in this kingdom, the reign of imposture and delusion is necessarily short-lived; and it is with unalloyed satisfaction, that the author of the Narrative, published in 1817, can now appeal to the solemn decisions of the Courts of Justice in Canada, while he can also call on those honorable men at home, whose object in these investigations, could only be the attainment of truth; to lay

aside any early prejudices, and calmly reflect on the striking coincidence of the charges of the Judges to the different Juries, with his detail of the acts of aggression and violence, which so progressively, though deplorably, led to that catastrophe, in which the unfortunate Mr. Semple and his people lost their lives.

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The Agents of the North-West Company have never attempted to conceal, that the aggressions of Lord Selkirk, produced acts of reciprocal violence and retaliation, which it was neither sought nor attempted abstractedly to justify. But were not such results the natural consequence of predetermined and persevering aggression? Could Lord Selkirk, when he hurried into such scenes, with his nominal, at least disputed title, have contemplated any different developement? Unbiassed men will ask themselves this plain question, Could Lord Selkirk be so uninstructed in the character of man; could he be so unread in those events, which have too frequently taken place in the remote parts of distant Colonies, on the very threshold of Indian tribes; where the description of persons engaged in rival pursuits must be, as well physically as morally, of a diversified

character ; where the protecting and awe-inspiring influence of the Law must, from the remoteness of authority, be considerably relaxed ; and where the want of that influence could only be supplied by the incessant activity and mutual co-operation, which the expectation of profit, combined with the difficulty of procuring food in these inhospitable regions, were calculated to excite,—in such circumstances, unbiassed men will ask, how it was possible the real or avowed scheme of his Lordship could get into operation, without producing, as necessarily as effect is connected with cause, the lamentable outrages, of which, since his Lordship's appearance, the Indian Territories of North America have been the theatre ?

A man, sincere in his professions, really actuated with a desire to respect property, and uphold the dominion of the Law, as well as from a solicitude to secure the interests and comforts of the unhappy persons, who had committed their destiny to his guidance, would have never thought of moving a single step, in his claim of territorial *sovereignty*, until he had, first, as a *sine qua non*, established his title beyond the



reach of objection or cavil; until he had silenced the claims of pre-occupying and conflicting interests, by the recognition of the competent authority; in a word, he would have met his opponents on the Red River, with some more satisfactory document, than a notice of ejection from Mr. Miles M'Donell, or a *fiat* from a self-elected leader of disbanded soldiers.

But though such a line of proceeding would have best corresponded with singleness of views and legality of purpose, it did not suit Lord Selkirk's object. The monopoly of the Canadian Fur Trade must have been obtained by other instruments—it must be first wrested from that body, whose predecessors and themselves had for nearly three quarters of a century, devoted their capital and their industry to the furtherance of its prosperity. An ambiguous title, a specious pretext, to be upheld promptly and efficiently by *a physical force*, were the means best suited to this fraudulent aggression. Of these, his Lordship endeavoured to avail himself; and whether considered in reference to what he did, or what he did not do, they furnish an internal evidence, which no bolstered-up statements, nor

influenced affidavits can rebut, of his real, though concealed, purpose to transfer to himself, on the premeditated ruin of the North-West Company, the monopoly of their trade. This charge Lord Selkirk and his connections may continue to deny in their pamphlets; it stands however unalterably confessed in the facts.

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As the Trials in Canada are now before the Public, it is unnecessary to enter into any analysis of the Narratives of Messrs. Pritchard, Pambrun, and Heurter, who were all examined and cross-examined on behalf of the prosecution. The intention of these publications, subsequently to the judicial investigation, can be no other, than the hope to impose some time longer on the credulity of certain well-intentioned persons in this country, disinclined to believe the extent of these aggressions of Lord Selkirk—to break, as it were, his fall in the public judgment, by the endeavour to excite suspicions of the purity of the Judicial Administration in Canada, and of the impartiality and justice of the responsible Servants of the Executive at home. This indiscriminate invective, fulminated by the Earl of Selkirk against His Majesty's Ministers,

Judges, Local Magistrates, Commissioners, nay, the Statute Law itself, "as furnishing means to "sanction injustice and legalize oppression," is the most decisive proof of the conscious desperation of his Lordship's case, and must carry home a similar conviction to every reasonable enquirer into the character of those events. They will feel, in the language of an eloquent moralist, "that the hideous and distorted picture, "which his imagination draws of others, whom he "does not know, can only be taken from a model "in his own breast, which he does know; so that "the result of his general accusation of all, is "merely the conviction of one, namely, himself; "—against whom, and against whom only, his "evidence is both competent and credible!" So strongly were the Representatives of the North-West Company impressed with this truth, as to be induced to provide for a more extended circulation of the Earl of Selkirk's Letter to the Earl of Liverpool, and the Correspondence of his Brother-in-Law, Mr. Halkett, one of the Directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, with the Colonial Department, by a re-publication, with the assurance, that in productions, abounding with

representations so irreconcilable, slander so indiscriminate, and contradictions so palpable, he that runs can detect them, and discover in every page, the poison and the antidote.

Another object in publishing this Narrative, is to prefix to it, a Map of the Country in which these unfortunate disputes have occurred, in order that those, who desire to examine with impartiality, the claims and merits of the two parties concerned in them, shall be able more distinctly to understand the Report (when printed) of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into them; together with the various Narratives and Statements already published.

What opinion the Commissioners have recorded on this subject, the North-West Company have no means of ascertaining. But of this, they have a conscientious assurance, that whatever degree of blame may be imputed in the Report, to some of their connexions, for unjustifiable conduct, subsequently to the original aggressions of Lord Selkirk, it is impossible, that any considerable difference can appear, in relation to the facts, as stated by the Special Commissioners, and in the Narrative of Oc-

currences in the Indian Country, published in 1817. In estimating the character of those proceedings, it should never be overlooked, that such reprisals were executed by persons wantonly irritated and deeply injured, by a system of insult and rapacity, almost unparalleled in the predatory annals of the Buccaneers. In the prosecution of that system, the end and the instruments most harmoniously accorded. Serjeant Heurter is an admirable witness in such a cause. He had authenticated his title to such patronage, and to his character for veracity and confidence, by a desertion from his engagements to one party, to enter as an hired affidavit-swearer, into the interests of the other!! It is on the testimony of this military and civil renegade, that an attempt is made to weaken the statements of two such men as Messrs. Brumby and Misani—the unsupported declaration of this Serjeant and *double* deserter, is the *forlorn* hope by which Lord Selkirk thinks he can asperse the character of his officers, and gain a colourable ground for the assertion, that the expedition which these two gentlemen accompanied from Fort William, was intended to destroy the Colony. This con-

fession of weakness, in his Lordship's resources, was not expected to be so openly avowed; though every arrival brought to the Agents of the North-West Company, a knowledge of facts, which went to demonstrate, that he disregarded as "a fastidious delicacy," any hesitation in receiving, or making up testimony of whatever description. The Narrative of 1817, has put upon record, the infamous and disgraceful manner in which Lord Selkirk, taking advantage of Mr. M'Kenzie's infirmity, tampered with him at Fort William;—in continuation of the same spirit, it is now to be recorded, that he bribed one of the Clerks of the North-West Company at Montreal to violate his trust, by copying papers and accounts for his Lordship's purposes from the books of his employers, and even to steal Documents, said to be now in his Lordship's possession.

Indeed the North-West Company can hail no opportunity, more congenial with their wishes, or their interests, than the arrival of that day, when, relieved from the obstructions and delays interposed through legal subtleties and difficulties in the pleadings, (and hereafter the



nature of these interruptions, and whence proceeding, will be explained to the Public), it shall at length be allowed them; to establish before a British Jury, that the whole of Lord Selkirk's connection with, and speculations in, the Indian Countries of North America, have had but one consistent, predetermined, though unavowed object, viz. the destruction of their trade, and the ruin of themselves. And that if his Lordship has to complain of excesses in the acts of retaliation; which he provoked, and by which he has been opposed, such violations of the Law were the deplorable result of that predatory example, which a British Nobleman of ample fortune, had exhibited in an American Wilderness, to a description of persons, who ought to have been considered so far below him in the scale either of mental, or worldly pretension,—whose lives had been entirely devoted, until his interruption, to the laborious toil and enterprising habits of the humble occupation of an Indian Trader.

It is reported amongst his Lordship's friends, that he is in possession of an intercepted Letter, from some person connected with the North-West Company, advising his seizure and assas-

sination. The last part of the story is incredible: it would be the most gratuitous act of wickedness and folly that human infatuation could devise. But in the *harlequinade* which his Lordship played on the banks of the Red River, in his storming, sapping, blockading, and starving operations of war, it is not very surprising, that those who suffered by the robberies of his armed force, and who could not foresee the extent of his aggressions, and preparations for further depredation, should have determined to stop his destructive progress by the seizure of his person. This Letter, if such a one there is, (and if it be not a forgery, which is far from being improbable), must have been written after the capture of Fort William, "to satisfy the "ENDS OF JUSTICE." It is omitted in all the previous publications, in order probably to produce effect hereafter, and to corroborate the suspicious evidence of Serjeant Heurter, that plans were laid to intercept any party sent into the interior, and, if necessary, to cut them off. Those who recollect that his Lordship moved in warlike array—that he encamped under the protection of his park of artillery—that he was

supplied with all the apparatus for a campaign, even to the *furnace* for red-hot shot—will be somewhat sceptical as to this order of assassination; unless they presume the Noble Leader to be as unacquainted with the precautions of a General, as he had proved himself careless of the duties of a Subject, and the powers of a Magistrate.

Mr. M'Donell's description of the sufferings of the first Colonists, of the severity of the climate, the want of any establishment which could conduce to the comfort or good government of such a Settlement, and of the disputes in which it has been involved with the Indians and Traders, may possibly have the further good effect of deterring many persons now suffering under the pressure of the times in this Country, and to whom the Press has lately teemed with delusive addresses, on the subject of the Red River Country, from completing the measure of human misery, by embarking in this wretched and hopeless speculation of Lord Selkirk's. It may prevent the success which individual schemers and land-jobbers too often obtain over the minds of their unsuspecting dupes, and

teach these poor creatures to receive with suspicion, invitations, even from those who have themselves been deceived. "Such invitations," says Dr. Johnson, "proceed from the natural malignity of hopeless misery. They are weary of themselves and of each other, and expect to find relief in new companions. They envy the liberty which their folly has forfeited, and would gladly see all mankind imprisoned like themselves!" Indeed, after what has passed, it is scarcely possible to believe, that His Majesty's Government will permit any further settlement until that main difficulty be removed, namely, the right and title of Lord Selkirk to the soil, and jurisdiction which he has assumed, and which, by the decision of the Judges of Lower Canada, on the trial of De Reinhard, is now declared to be supposititious and invalid. Until that decision shall be reversed, by some proceeding before a superior tribunal, the establishment of any Colony for agricultural purposes, in this part of the Indian Country, as in all others, is contrary to the King's Proclamation of 1763: a Proclamation

issued under a full conviction of the evils which must always attend any attempt to reconcile the interests of the Agriculturist with the feelings and jealousies of the Indian Hunters.—These latter must retire from the country, which *it is necessary* should be occupied by the former; and it will be sufficient time to entertain the question of policy—How far it may be desirable to force Agricultural Establishments in the Indian Country, west of Lake Superior, when the wild, but productive lands of Upper Canada, are cultivated and settled?

[illegible]

# NARRATIVE,

&c. &c.

IN the month of September, 1809, I first came to Red River. Harmony, peace, and a perfect good understanding then subsisted between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian Traders; as well as among all classes of people, white and brown: all followed their usual occupations in peace and quietness; the only disturbers of tranquillity near the department, were the Scioux tribe of Indians; their incursions, however, were not frequent, and no whites had as yet received the slightest injury from them; but in no part of the Indian country was a more friendly intercourse carried on between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadians, and which continued until Lord Selkirk's connection with the former.

I passed upwards of two years in Red River, previous to the arrival of any of his Lordship's Colonists, and it was in the autumn of 1811, that the first intelligence reached Red River,

of the arrival of Emigrants in Hudson's Bay, said to have landed at York Factory.

Although only a Clerk of the North-West Company, I formed an early resolution of giving my countrymen, the expected Colonists; every assistance; and though my actions were subject to be canvassed by my employers, I was too well convinced of their disposition towards these poor people, to dread reproach for such aid as I had it in my power to render them.

In fall 1812, Miles Macdonell and the first Settlers made their appearance in Red River, in company with the Traders from Hudson's Bay. There were few or no married men among them, and they consisted principally of *Colony-servants*, a class of men hitherto little noticed in the accounts of the newly-founded establishment on Red River. Their appearance represented misery itself. Their sufferings the winter before in Hudson's Bay are well known, and had occasioned various disturbances between them and the officers appointed by Lord Selkirk to lead and command them.—I pitied them much, and, as they were suffering severely for want of provisions, I made application to the late Mr. John Wills, for permission to afford them such immediate assistance as our means would allow. This was not withheld;—Miles Macdonell was directed to send his people to our Establishment, where they received an ample supply of such pro-



visions as we had ; indeed our own servants suffered some privations in consequence ; particularly those who had a long and tedious passage to perform up the Assiniboine River, and who had solely to depend upon the provisions issued to them at the Forks of the Red River.

The Hudson's Bay Traders, soon after their arrival, took their different stations for the winter, and Miles Macdonell appeared at a loss what measures to adopt for the preservation of his Colony-servants, and an additional number of Settlers who were expected. He bitterly complained, and I believe with some cause, of the little assistance afforded him by the Gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Company, who, to make use of his own words, "foiled him in all his measures since he had arrived in the country."

On expressing a desire to see the country in the vicinity of the Forks, in order, as he said, to form an establishment at some distance from ours, that he might not interfere with our business, so tender did he appear to be of our interest at that time, I ordered my own saddle-horses for him, and sent a Canadian free-man to shew him the country, and attend him. The following day he returned, apparently not much satisfied with his excursion, and expressing his disappointment generally, of the country, and particularly that he could find no eligible situation for a town, which

he had directions to establish.—It was, however, arranged, that he should make Pembina River his head-quarters, with most of his people, for the winter, as it was hoped provisions might be had there in greater abundance ; and only a few were left at the Forks, to begin improvements.

These were destitute of all means of subsistence, and were dependent upon the humanity of the North-West Company's Clerk, Mr. B. J. Frobisher, who wintered at the point adjoining to the intended new Settlement. This gentleman kept the unfortunate wretches, who had been thus left to their fate, from starvation ; and was, in consequence, reduced with his people to short allowance during the greatest part of the winter.

I got part of Miles' baggage conveyed by land to Pembina River, which post had been allotted as my trading station, and it was agreed between us, to proceed there together. The Gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Company had forgot to procure a horse for the new Governor, in consequence of which I lent him my own favourite poney. The day after our arrival, was spent in looking out for a spot proper to build upon, and the situation was fixed on, where now Fort Daer stands.

Miles was often at a loss how to procure the means of subsistence. He was not on good terms with Mr. Hugh Heney, the Hudson's Bay Trader, from whom he said he was to receive various

supplies; and indeed Mr. Heney, from the number of men under his own management, had it not in his power to afford him much assistance. According to my first determination, of relieving the wants of the unfortunate Emigrants, I took an active part in procuring hunters, &c. and giving every aid and advice, as to the means of obtaining subsistence for the people arrived, and those daily expected; and from the moment Miles and his party arrived at Pembina, seldom or ever twenty-four hours passed without a call on my store for provisions; and it remains for them to say, whether I was then, or ever afterwards, deaf to their demands.

The buildings of the Colony were going on but slowly; and I advised Miles to engage as many of the Canadian free-men as he possibly could, to assist in erecting them.

The autumn being fine, and the weather continuing warm, Miles took a jaunt down to the Forks, being anxious, as he said, about the non-arrival of the expected Settlers. He returned in a canoe sent up by Mr. Frobisher, and manned by the North-West Company's servants, expressly for his accommodation.—These people afterwards related several stories, and spoke of language held out "*par le Gouverneur*," tending to make them swerve from their duty to their masters; but such reports, however verified by after events, were then treated with disregard,

and as idle stories invented by the voyageurs, to enhance the value of their services and fidelity.

At length, the long-looked for Emigrants from Europe arrived, under the command of the late unfortunate Mr. Owen Keveny, having been favoured with a mild and uncommonly fine season.

Some of the natives were drinking at the Hudson's Bay trading-post at the time of their arrival; they came running up with frantic looks, on perceiving which, I called to the Interpreter, and met them, enquiring the cause of their conduct. An old Chief stepped forward, and addressed me as follows: "My Son," giving me his hand, "did you not see, did you not see?"—"What?" replied I—"What! those women with the white caps, and those white children—to-day I am truly alarmed, to-day only I am alarmed."—"Surely," replied I, "women with white caps can never frighten an old Warrior like you, my Father"—wishing to appease the old man; but he went on—"Be silent, my Son," said he, "you white people think us Indians to be fools; we were told by the Hudson's Bay Traders, that by the time the leaves would fall, we should see a great number of Whites arrive, who were to make gardens on our lands, and drive all the Canadian Traders away; that these rivers and lands belonged to a great Chief on the other

" side of the water. We did not then believe  
 " such reports, but we now see they are true.  
 " Is it our Great Father, who thus intends to rob  
 " his red children of their own lands, and render  
 " them pitiful? He acted not thus towards them  
 " at Michilemackinac: when he got his chil-  
 " dren's lands there, he asked them first if they  
 " would sell him part of them, which, when they  
 " consented to, he paid them plenty of goods for,  
 " and does the same every year. It is only the  
 " Bigknives who rob lands from the Indians,  
 " and render them pitiful. You will see, my  
 " Son, these lands will be spoiled by the Whites:  
 " these Indians are fools," (pointing to the young  
 " lads about him), " they do not understand mat-  
 " ters; I am an old man, and have taken great  
 " Chiefs by the hand at Mackinac. I recollect  
 " their advice: they told me never to hurt our  
 " fathers' children, the Whites, and that our  
 " fathers' children would never pillage or hurt  
 " Indians: tell me then, who is this great Chief,  
 " as they call him, who thus robs us?"—With  
 " the assistance of his son, a fine, sensible, peace-  
 " able Indian, the old Chief became more calm;  
 " but, turning round to the young Indians, " Chil-  
 " dren," said he, " listen to the Traders, they  
 " endure misery and hardship to bring us our  
 " wants; they have supported our forefathers,  
 " and brought us up; they never say these  
 " lands belong to them, they are our relations

“and friends.”—This Chief and his family traded his peltries with the Hudson's Bay Company, but such were his sentiments towards the Colony. He is dead of late, and was known by the name of Kee-neese. The interpreter, J. B. Roy, is still living in Red River.

The season soon set in with severity, and the families began to suffer extremely from intense cold. Many had no other shelter than huts of brushwood thrown carelessly up; and the augmentation of their numbers occasioned a greater scarcity of provisions. Their miseries were of various descriptions. The buffalo were at a great distance, and the Colony hunters were in general unsuccessful; indeed they were but badly attended to by their employers. The Hudson's Bay Traders could give little or no assistance, as they were themselves very indifferently supplied. I had but few men with me, but they were (fortunately for the poor Colonists) most active and industrious, and were enabled by their activity and exertions, to support themselves, and materially to assist their distressed neighbours. At this period also, the Hudson's Bay Company had recourse to my stores.

About the beginning of January, the greater part of their people were got housed promiscuously in log-huts, without floorings, the windows cut out, but together with the doors,

were in general closed by bundles of hay, and the poor people were often near being suffocated by the smoke.—To add to their distresses, Miles and his officers were at variance. Discontent, disappointment, and disaffection, reigned amongst all classes within the walls of Fort Daer. The Colonists were entirely dejected, and resigned to almost any fate. Horses, so essential in that country, had not (with the exception of a few poor animals) been procured. Dogs were even wanting. Demands upon demands were made upon me almost daily for assistance, and assistance was afforded then, and at all times, when I could render it without endangering the lives of my people.

Miles even considered it proper to forbid the Settlers to visit the North-West post, as he said, for fear of their being too troublesome. His orders, however, were not strictly followed, for they still found their way, and experienced the usual hospitality.

In consequence of the want of horses or dogs, resort was had to coupling and yoking the men to sledges made for horses, and it was customary for each sledge to have its driver, called overseers, who had no scruple of making free use of his stick on the backs of those he drove. They were obliged to perform this duty destitute of all necessaries, such as snow-shoes, caps, mittens, leather or blanket coats, socks, kettles, fire-steel,

or flint; and it is a fact which cannot be denied, that some of these wretches, for want of the means of making a fire, have buried themselves in banks of snow, to prevent their being frozen to death, and have often been forced to eat the raw meat off their sledges.

The few buffalo killed by the Colony-hunters, were staged\* at a great distance, and it was found impossible by Miles to support all his people in any manner longer together; he came therefore to the determination of sending off a number of the Settlers and families to live in the Plains. His orders to this effect were given out in cold stormy weather, which still did not prevent those who were to depart, from getting ready the best way they could; but the day appointed for their leaving Fort Daer being remarkably boisterous and severe, (so much so, as to prevent smart and hardy Canadians, my men, from undertaking a trip to the Plains to fetch meat), the women and children shewed some reluctance to leaving the fort. However, the Governor's orders must be obeyed, and they were packed off at all risks. As might be foreseen, these miserable people had not proceeded far, before the women and children were overcome by the cold,

\* The Buffalo-hunters, when they kill an animal, strip off the muscular part of the flesh, and hang it up to dry on frames of wood, called *stages*; hence the term, *dried meat*.



and with difficulty reached a bluff of wood, not far distant, where, having been furnished with the means of making a fire by the Canadians, they encamped for the remaining part of the day, and following night. Next morning they continued their journey, sinking up to their knees in snow, and, as I was informed, cursing Lord Selkirk at every step. They, however, made out to reach Pembina River Mountain, half famished and nipped by the frost, where they remained till the latter end of the winter, and suffered many privations.

Miles had employed one François Delorme, to act for him at the Forks, and had given, contrary to his own repeated and voluntary professions of not interfering with the Fur Trade, an assortment of goods to him, for the purpose of trading peltries with the natives, all of whom had, as customary at the beginning of winter, received their necessities on credit to a large amount, from Mr. Frobisher. He also made application to Mr. Hillier, for an active clerk to manage the post at the Forks, and proposed Mr. Hillier's giving a supply of goods for the post, where, he said, his agent Delorme, would act as Indian Trader, and Mr. Sloane (the Hudson's Bay clerk, who was sent according to his request), as master of the men.

I mention this circumstance, not because we had any right to object to Lord Selkirk's agents

carrying on the Fur Trade, although they might have abstained from opposing us at the particular place and moment when we were straining every nerve to feed, protect, and support the wretched Emigrants, who had been deluded, by the falshoods published in Great Britain, to leave their homes, on this desperate undertaking, but because I have heard it stated with confidence, that his Lordship's views were completely and entirely unconnected with objects of trade; whereas they have always appeared to us in the country, from the measures adopted since his Lordship's connection with the Hudson's Bay Company, as the principal inducement which led to that connection. This commencement of interference, however, and opposition to our trade, certainly produced some jealousy at the time; I considered it afterwards my duty, and recommended to my people, to adopt the same line of conduct, to be more guarded in any information relative to trade, or to the country; but the former good understanding and general assistance with respect to provisions, was still continued.

The Hudson's Bay clerk, Mr. Sloane, at the Forks, and Miles' trader, Delorme, could not agree together; and Mr. Sloane, in disgust with his colleague, left the Forks, and came up to Pembina to Mr. Hillier. Delorme soon followed, and at the Governor's earnest entreaty,

Mr. Frobisher took the entire management of the Settlers, and affairs at the Forks, after which I believe they were better off than when under the care of Sloane and Delorme, and additional exertions were made by Mr. Frobisher to procure fresh meat, in which he was not unsuccessful.

In February 1813, Mr. J. D. Cameron, wintering Partner in river Winnipic, paid me a visit, and we received frequent invitations to Miles' house, where we were as well entertained as his circumstances would permit. Mr. Cameron, desirous of evincing his good wishes to the Colonists as his country people, furnished Miles and Mr. M'Lean with seed for the Settlement, wheat, potatoes, and barley.

On my return from the Forks to the Pembina River, early in the Spring, I received a note from Miles, accusing me of holding language to the Settlers and Colony-servants, tending to seduce them from the Colony service, and requesting me to forbear from further visits. In his accusation regarding his people, he was perfectly wrong: he grounded his assertion on my telling one Hector M'Donell, that honest industrious men might receive lands from the Crown in Upper Canada, and enjoy the blessings of peace, society, and christianity; but I neither advised him, nor any of them, to go to Canada, or leave the service.

But the cause of such conduct was obvious.

The winter was at an end, Miles thought himself independent of our assistance, and he knew also of the contest with the Americans, and how it would naturally affect the Traders from Canada. The approaching ruin of the North-West Company was whispered to our servants all winter, though not with so much audacity as the following season. Secure, however, as Miles thought himself as to provisions, he was unfortunately wrong: the greater part of his people were collected at Fort Daer, who consumed the trifling stock of fresh meat procured there. About this period a poor young lad, Magnus Isbester, lost his life, and became a prey to the wolves, in the following manner: he came in a weak and pitiable condition from the Salt Springs, Red River, to Fort Daer, where he stated the period of time he had fasted, and requested food: he was instantly ordered off to the camp of Michael Macdonell, distant about thirty miles. When he arrived there, having fasted three days, some food was given to him, with orders to depart the following morning to a Canadian hunter's tent, at or near the Hare-hills. Next morning he requested something to eat before he set out, but which M'Donell refused to give him. A Scotch girl, perceiving this treatment of the poor boy, went to an Indian tent near at hand, and, with her own clothes, bartered some meat, of which she

cooked, and gave him a piece. On perceiving this, Michael M'Donell came into the tent in a fit of rage, whilst the poor lad endeavoured to conceal his piece of meat under his coat; but Michael shook him, and the piece of meat fell to the ground. Michael took it up, and threatened the girl; but she told him she was not ashamed of what she had done; that she had purchased the meat with her own property, and might give it to whom she thought fit; reproaching M'Donell for his want of humanity, in ordering a poor weak boy to cross a wide plain of thirty miles without shelter in such a boisterous and stormy day. His orders were however repeated for Isbester to depart immediately; and the unfortunate boy set off fasting and alone, and, as might naturally be expected in his feeble condition, perished, from the effects of hunger and of the weather, about the middle of the Plain. He became a prey to the wolves, and part of his hair, his clothes, and bones, were found by two of the Colony-servants some time afterwards, in coming to Fort Daer from the Hare-hills.

In the month of May, Miles, with part of his people, came down to the Forks, to commence their agricultural operations. The Traders of both Companies had also arrived from their different winter stations. Mr. Wills and Miles had several interviews together, and were on

the most friendly terms, and Mr. Wills sold the Company's horned-cattle, swine, and poultry, to the Settlement, for the trifling price of one hundred pounds.

An Irishman of the name of Welch, though he had a wife and child at the Settlement, had, on account of the oppression of overseers and other petty officers, made frequent application for a passage in the North-West Company's canoes, to rescue himself, as he said, from bondage, but had been as often refused. He however made out to procure a small canoe, and with the utmost danger and difficulty got to the river Winnipeg, where he embarked in some of the Company's canoes without their sanction; of whom more by and bye.

Having accompanied the different brigades of canoes from the north, in the summer, to Fort William, I found Miles had written a letter to the Agents of the North-West Company there, complaining of my conduct and that of Mr. J. D. Cameron, for having excited discontent among the Colonists, by misrepresentation; and in a peremptory manner requiring, that neither of us should reassume our stations in the Winnipeg, or Red River.

The day after my arrival, I was questioned by Mr. William M'Gillivray, as to the number of Settlers, and their sufferings during the past season; he also made me acquainted with Miles'

accusations, and enquired by whose orders Welch, the Colonist, had been brought out. I could only tell him the truth, that from the moment the Settlers arrived in Red River, I had given them all the support in my power; that Mr. Cameron had shewn every disposition to assist them also; and that Welch had made his way out contrary to our desire. It would be injustice to Mr. McGillivray to conceal, that he sympathized with the Settlers for the many privations they had suffered, and strongly recommended a continuance of assistance towards them; concluding by saying, "You must absolutely take Welch back to his employers; such conduct would be void of good principles, and a bad example to servants in general." As far as I can recollect, these were the very words Mr. McGillivray made use of. Welch, the Colonist, who was almost naked, then got a suit of clothes, and was ordered to prepare to return to his former employers. As neither Miles M'Donell, or any other Hudson's Bay Factor or Agent had any right to dictate to the North-West Company the line of conduct they were to pursue, as to the prosecution of their usual trade, there was but one opinion about my returning to my old department with Mr. Wills.

The day of our departure for the interior, whilst talking with Mr. McGillivray on our plans for the future season, he recommended to us to afford

every practicable relief to the Settlers; and understanding that the Emigrants complained of the want of retail shops, he directed enquiries to be made, whether the Agents of the Colony would wish the North-West Company to send goods suitable for that purpose to Red River, which would be disposed of at as low a price as possible.

In September following I arrived at the Colony, and in conformity with my instructions from the Agents at Fort William, delivered Welch, the Colonist, to the late unfortunate Mr. Alexander M'Lean, Miles being absent then at York Factory. The Settlers at the Forks had suffered considerably this summer from sickness; some lost their lives, and others were still in a low condition. We learnt that Miles had remained some time in the country, after the departure of the Traders of both parties to Fort William and Hudson's Bay, and had prohibited the free-men and others from felling timber; and the language he had continued to hold during the summer, indicated serious hostility against us, when he should have sufficient means.

Late in the fall, he returned from York Factory, where he had been detained, in expectation of Emigrants from Europe, but in whose arrival he was disappointed, those who came out, being obliged to winter at Churchill. After a short stay at the Forks, he proceeded with part of his people to Pembina River, where one of his Over-



seers and the Settlers he had left, had passed the summer, not without some danger from the Scionx, who had killed four Canadian free-hunters in the vicinity of their post.

Mr. Alexander M'Lean, the chief settler, had taken up his residence at the Forks; and was enabled, chiefly by means which I afforded, to get a small dwelling-house erected, and temporarily arranged for the winter season.

Intelligence of the capture of the British squadron in the month of September 1813, on Lake Erie, and the conquest of Detroit by the Americans, reached us about the beginning of the winter by express; and we were alarmed by declarations and threats, that the difficulty in which our trade was placed, by the events of the war, was to be taken advantage of, for the commencement of attempts for its destruction. Our communication with the Canadas was apparently cut off, and Miles determined to strike a decisive blow at once, by the seizure of our provisions, being convinced, that if the Michigan territory was lost, the intelligence of which was also daily expected, the means of subsistence for our numerous servants were to be alone procured in the Red River country.

To delude the ignorant, and obtain their assistance to his aggressions, under pretence of legal authority, on the 8th of January, 1814, he is-

sued his famous Proclamation for the seizure of provisions and blockade of the country ; and his colleagues were busily employed in endeavours to shake the fidelity of the North-West Company's servants to their employers, by representations of their approaching and unavoidable ruin ; " that they were intruders on these lands ; " had on all occasions treated their servants " with tyranny ; that engagements entered into " with them in Canada, were not binding, or " legal, according to the laws and regulations " enacted by Lord Selkirk and the Hudson's " Bay Company, for their Establishments ; that " their engagés might legally desert their service, " and enter into that of Lord Selkirk as voyageurs " or settlers, if they thought fit ; describing to " them the advantages to be derived from entering into his Lordship's employment ; stating to them also, that any individual protecting property against the terms of the Proclamation, was acting against law, and in open rebellion ; and that although the Governor would not himself take the trouble of trying them, although the power as vested in him, he would send in irons to Hudson's Bay, any daring enough to act in any way contrary to his edicts."

So much dissatisfaction at their situation, and discontent, notwithstanding, existed among his

own people, that the best argument the Governor could urge with them to obey his orders, was the risk of famine, unless they seized the North-West Company's provisions; and this had only weight in the first instance with the Irish Settlers, the Scotch being decidedly averse to acting in any way against their countrymen, from whom they had received so much support and assistance. Miles was, however, to use his own assertion, "determined to clear "the Red River of the North-Westers;" and having induced, by various means, most of the *Colony-servants*, chiefly single men, to consider themselves bound to enforce the Proclamation, they were immediately and regularly trained for that purpose to the use of small fire-arms and artillery.

He likewise considered it a prudent preparatory measure, to seduce some of the North-West Company's clerks from their duty, and for this object paid a visit to Aulay M'Aulay, at Turtle River, who was in charge of a small trading post at that place, and succeeded, unfortunately, in prevailing upon him to believe in the legality of his aggressions. Mr. M'Aulay represented to the men under his command, that they were unauthorized to defend their masters' property, "as the Governor, being employed by a great "Lord, who was legal owner of the coun-

“try, had a right to take the provisions from “the Traders.” For this conduct M’Aulay was dismissed the service ; but some excuse may be found for his conduct, as his father was a dependant of Miles Macdonell, and of course his influence was naturally increased by gratitude due for acts of kindness rendered to his family by the Governor.

Another, and the principal post in the department, was under the charge of Mr. John Pritchard, at Qu’ Appelle. Here our store provisions were chiefly traded and procured ; and the Hudson’s Bay Company had also a trading post for the same object. Miles could not at first conveniently obtain an interview with Pritchard, but, as he openly boasted, he had his spies in our forts, and ascertained that Pritchard was staggered at the powers assumed in his Proclamation, and rightly concluded that little persuasion was required to prevent his taking proper measures for the defence of the provisions entrusted to him.

The late Mr. John Wills was stationed for the winter at River la Souris, in chief charge of the Red River district ; and then lingering under a nervous disease, his conduct can only be accounted for by debility of mind and body. He appeared equally to be infected with apprehension of Miles’s authority, and with a belief in

the legality of the pretensions on which it was assumed,

Thus the leader of the Red River department for the North-West Company, and two of his clerks, with the men under their command, stood affected, at a time when a steady and resolute resistance of oppression was called for, instead of subserviency and acquiescence to these unwarrantable measures. The few servants not corrupted or intimidated, were nine or ten honest Canadians at the Forks, with a couple of unexperienced clerks at their head, destitute in a great degree of the means of self-defence.

In May 1814, Miles being apprehensive that the North-West Company's provisions might, by exertion, reach the Forks of Red River, and be lodged there till the arrival of the people from the northward, and elsewhere, who would not tamely submit to famine, hastened down from Pembina River with the Colony-servants, who had been regularly disciplined, armed with muskets and bayonets, and with a field-piece or two mounted on carriages.

Mr. Wills at River la Souris, had given orders to Mr. Pritchard at River Qu' Appelle, to join him with the provisions collected at his post, sooner than customary. The provisions reached River la Souris in May, and two Canadians, André Poitras and Pierre Souci, being on their

way to the Forks, Mr. Wills employed them to take down one of the batteaux heavily laden with pemican, as he was short of hands, and followed them himself in a light canoe, to seek medical assistance and advice from Mr. Holdsworth, surgeon of the Colony:

A few days afterwards, information was received that a party of men, well armed and accoutred, with a field-piece mounted, had proceeded up the banks of the Assiniboine River, with orders from Miles to take the batteau, or sink her in case of resistance. Mr. Wills had become much worse soon after his arrival, and this intelligence appeared so greatly to depress his spirits, as to render him incapable of directing any steps to be taken for the preservation of the provisions.—It therefore became my duty, if possible, to protect my employers' property till the arrival of some Partner from the north, who would then act as he might judge expedient; and upon representing, with Mr. Seraphim Lamar, our situation to Mr. Wills, he told me to act for the best, as his state of health would not permit him to make any exertion on the occasion.

I agreed with Mr. Lamar to proceed early next morning to ascertain where the boat was, if it had not been intercepted by Miles's party; and as they were reported to be eight in num-

ber, we determined to take only an equal strength, to shew our peaceable intentions, and at the same time to convince them, that we intended to defend the property. We therefore summoned six men to accompany us with their fusils, and explained to them the business upon which we were going, asking them if they would defend their masters' property if attempts were made to seize it illegally: they answered, "Yes, to the last, we must not be starved to death."

After proceeding a mile or two up the banks of the Assiniboine River, we found the late John Warren, the leader of the band sent out by M'Donell, who had taken an advantageous position for accomplishing his predatory orders. His field-piece was mounted and pointed towards the river. On perceiving us, he turned out his party under arms. I told my people to keep the high road, and that I would go myself to the bank of the river, to ascertain if the boat had arrived there. I did so, and Mr. Lamar and some of the men followed, fearing, from the well-known violent disposition of Warren, that some accident might happen. We found the boat had not arrived, and determined to order it to stop wherever it might be met, and the provisions to be secreted for the present. After dispatching a courier to Poitras with these

orders; we returned with our people, fortunately without meeting Miles M'Donell, who with his whole force, an additional field-piece, and his surgeon Holdsworth, had taken the field. His number might have amounted to sixty effective men, well armed and accoutred.

Soon after our return, Mr. Wills received a note from Miles, complaining of our having appeared in arms, which he considered as being in open rebellion; and Mr. Wills was required to cause his clerks to discontinue wearing side-arms. He further declared, that he had a body of armed men stationed on the banks of the Assiniboine River, to support a *constable* he had appointed to enforce all his decrees.

The common high road was also obstructed, and the free Canadian hunters and Half-breeds in their usual and peaceable occupations were chased, and taken prisoners by men with fixed bayonets, for no other cause than being suspected by Miles of being favourably inclined towards the North-West Company. So rigorous was the blockade, as to prevent the very Indians from passing and repassing. To my certain knowledge, an Indian on his way down from Portage des Prairies, was taken prisoner with his wife by the blockading party, and kept at their camp, till the pleasure of the *Commander-in-chief* was known.



There were several Indians and free-men at the Forks at this period, who all spontaneously offered their services to Mr. Wills, to resist the pretensions and violences of Miles. The free Canadian hunters proposed, as the communication by water was not practicable, on account of the cannon, and the strong body of armed men employed in the blockade, that in conjunction with the Company's servants, they should procure horses and carts sufficient to unload the batteau, and convey its cargo by land, and as the Indians present promised to assist them in case of being attacked, they had hopes of being successful, from the shelter the carts would afford them; besides, it was their opinion that Miles would not be daring enough to commence shedding their blood in such a cause. The natives were unanimously inclined to this opinion, and said, "The gardeners want to frighten you out of your provisions; but they dare not besmear these lands with the blood of our relations." Mr. Wills listened attentively to all these proposals, and returned his thanks for the aid which was offered him, but declined the services both of the Canadian free-hunters and natives. The spirits of the few people at the Forks became depressed by the language and the general conduct of this unfortunate man, which occasioned also some altercation between us.—Want of provisions was

also severely felt, from the difficulty of bringing them down, and the people began to be dissatisfied and alarmed.

The blockading party, disappointed in the non-arrival of the boat, began to suspect that the provisions had been secreted. Finding that André Poitras and Pierre Souci, the two men who had orders to conceal them, could not be prevailed upon, either by bribes or promises, to divulge where the pemican had been placed, a party of armed men were dispatched to bring them down as prisoners. Accordingly they were taken, and brought down without warrants, or the pretence of legal form. They were told by the Governor they had been guilty of a heinous crime; and that they had subjected themselves to the risk of being sent immediately, bound hand and foot, in irons, to Hudson's Bay, and thence to England, to stand their trials as criminals, which would still be their fate, if they persisted in their non-compliance with his demand. He told them further, that Mr. Wills had informed him, they had both secreted the pemican, and that they were the only people who could find it. The idea of being torn from their families, and transported beyond seas as felons, added to some doubts they entertained, whether Mr. Wills himself was not indifferent as to their fate, as well as that of the property, induced them to con-

fess where it was deposited. On the following morning a party was dispatched in quest of it, and in the course of a day or two returned with the long looked for plunder, consisting of about a hundred bags of pemican, of ninety pounds each. Great satisfaction was expressed on the arrival of the prize at headquarters, and much praise was bestowed on the officers and men who had performed this service, in which they had evinced such activity and zeal.

Miles was condescending enough to offer some of our people, that when they were entirely destitute of food, they might make application to him for their rations; but his offer met with the contempt it deserved, though we all suffered considerably.

As the management of the Company's affairs, from the state of Mr. Wills's health, naturally devolved upon me, till the arrival of some Partner, I judged it necessary to request Mr. Pritchard to put the provisions then at River la Souris, under his care, immediately in store at that place, and by no means to put them afloat, or risk them down the river, till he received further orders from his superiors. Pritchard complied with my request, and appeared mortified at the depredations committed by Miles's people below.

Miles' proceedings were moreover marked with much inconsistency; for the man who was one day exercising his power as a Hudson's Bay Governor, from which body he pretended to derive the whole of his power and authority, on the next, suddenly summoned us all to appear before him in his magisterial capacity, as Justice of the Peace for the Indian Territories; and in one of his capricious humours, he bound to keep the peace, the late John Wills, in 100*l*. for a twelve-month, solely with an intention of degrading a member of the North-West Company in the eyes of their servants, and to alarm them by the extent of his power. We were stigmatised as rebels, men in open rebellion, a set of petty adventurers, intruders on the lands, with many other appellations not worth repeating. Our servants were taken out of our fort at any hour thought convenient, to answer to alleged charges, but in fact, with a view of obtaining information from them as to the situation of our property, and the means of plundering it.

Mr. John Dougald Cameron arrived at the Forks on the 1st of June, and being a Partner of the concern, of course took the charge off my hands. He came immediately to the resolution of allowing none of our servants to go near Lord Selkirk's post, and of preventing any future molestation to ourselves and our people, within

our own house. Mr. Cameron had a crew of eight active Canadians, who, with the men of the place, might make about twenty, a number thought sufficient to keep the others at bay.

After the evidence that has been published, of these robberies, and likewise of that committed by Spencer in June, of the remainder of the North-West Company's property at River la Souris, under the immediate charge of Mr. John Pritchard, as well as of the aversion shewn by the North-West Company to using extreme measures in defence of their persons and property, even at a time when they had ample force for that purpose, it is unnecessary for me to enter into further detail of these proceedings.

In spring 1814, Miles M'Donell had appointed several peace officers, perfectly unqualified for such situations, and one of them, Hugh Swords, appointed a constable, hesitating to take the oath which the honest man imagined was necessary, Miles very composedly told him that he would dispense with that formality, as it was solely by way of experiment or trial that he had nominated a sheriff and constables.

In the summer of 1814, when the Partners of the North-West Company were assembled from their different wintering stations at Fort William, these outrageous proceedings, and the necessity of counteracting them by some efficient

and legal measures, were fully discussed. On information being taken, on oath by some of the parties present, who were appointed Magistrates for the Indian Territories by the Governor of Lower Canada, warrants were granted for the apprehension of both M'Donell and Spencer; and Joseph Brisbois, Augustin La Vigne, Joseph Lambert, and one or two more, were sworn in to act as constables for the space of twelve calendar months; and this seems to be the whole ground upon which Lord Selkirk's accusation of all the Partners of the North-West Company, for having at that period entered into a conspiracy against his Colony at Red River, is founded.

Spencer was arrested under this warrant, and brought to the North-West Company's establishment at the Forks, where he remained a night, and, notwithstanding his repeated outrageous conduct, his reception and treatment was that of a gentleman. On the following day, the constable whose prisoner Spencer was, perceiving an intention on the part of the most unruly of the Settlers to rescue him from his custody, ordered a small escort of the Company's engagés to support him in the execution of his duty, and accompany him till his prisoner was conducted past the Settlement, or huts of the Settlers below.

Whilst proceeding down Red River in the

peaceable execution of his duty, in two canoes, with six or seven Canadians in each, they were wantonly fired upon, and brought on shore, where a body of armed Colonists, with two field-pieces loaded, and matches lighted, were stationed to rescue the prisoner. The minds of these disorderly people were inflamed by intoxication, and they were frequently on the point of blowing the canoes and crews to atoms; and that no such catastrophe occurred, may be ascribed to the steady and cool determination manifested by the Canadians in their perilous situation, to the interference of the late unfortunate Mr. Alexander M'Lean, and to some remonstrances on the part of Spencer himself, from the situation in which he was placed.

After the prisoner had been conveyed past all danger of rescue by this rabble, Mr. Cameron, and one or two more, returning peaceably, were waylaid on the common highway, by one Michael Heyden, and being utterly unprepared for such an attack, would probably have fallen victims to the hands of an assassin, had it not been for the immediate interference, in a cool moment of reflection on the fatal consequences which might ensue, of a clerk then at the Colony.

It has been falsely asserted, that the Bois-brûlés were paraded and exercised in arms under the immediate inspection of Duncan Cameron. Mr.



Cameron had only two Bois-brulés, Bostonnois Pangman and a boy, wintering with him: but there was a Camp of Bois-brulés and Canadian hunters at Pembina River, winter 1815, assembled as usual at that season for the collection of provisions, against whom Miles M'Donell marched with a body of armed men, intending to possess himself of the produce of their hunt; but on his near approach, they called in their stragglers, and put themselves in a posture to receive the Governor, which astonished the party, and caused him to retreat to his government-house at Fort Daer; and to this attempt, may principally be attributed the part which the Bois-brulés in general afterwards took against him and the Colonists.

Previous to the arrival of the North West Company's people from Qu' Appelle River, in May, 1815; Miles Macdonell had been also apprehended, but the constable who served the warrant had not sufficient force to support him in the execution of his duty, and narrowly escaped being himself imprisoned in the attempt. Afterwards, understanding that Miles was getting a boat in readiness to set off for Hudson's Bay, the constable, in the dread of losing his prisoner, made application to Mr. Cameron for a party to apprehend him a second time as he past Frog Plain. The application could certainly not be made to the Hudson's Bay Company, for they



were in arms to screen the prisoner from justice, and facilitate his escape. Mr. Cameron and myself thought it our duty to assist the officer entrusted with the warrant; and as it would have been folly, to have sent a force inadequate to command the peace and to support the constable, a considerable party proceeded with him to Frog Plain, but not before having given notice to Mr. James Sutherland, the Agent for the Hudson's Bay Company, of the purpose for which they were sent, which was to search for the prisoner in any craft proceeding down Red River, or in any party passing by land downward; and requiring him and his people to desist from endeavouring to protect Miles McDonnell from the operation of the law.

Whilst stationed at Frog Plain, watching with the constable, the men frequently went backwards and forwards to Mr. Cameron's Fort, higher up than the Settlement, without giving the least molestation to any person, although on the other side Miles's sentries repeatedly gave them provocation, as they passed along the road.

On the evening of the 10th of June, a party of Half-breeds, returning back to their encampment at Frog Plain with a small supply of provisions, in the dusk of the evening, were assailed, and wantonly fired upon by the Colonists and Hudson's Bay servants, posted for the purpose behind a ditch facing the high road. The Half-

breeds, though without shelter, and only seven or eight in number, returned the fire, which drew Miles and the rest of his force to a general action. A lad was dispatched with intelligence of this attack to our establishment at the Forks, and a horse being then ready saddled, I speedily mounted, and proceeded with another gentleman to the place where the parties were engaged. The Half-breeds had retreated a few paces, and taken a secure position covered by a bank. After a little expostulation, I succeeded in stopping the firing on their part, and the others also soon after followed their example, and retired to their garrison. I exerted my utmost endeavours the more to prevent the continuance of such hostilities, from a dread of the consequences which might naturally be expected from the character and disposition of the class of people who had been attacked. The Half-breeds, now exasperated beyond controul, clapped spurs to their horses, flew to their brethren at Frog Plain, and gave a rapid report of the unprovoked attack upon them; calling upon all the Brulés on the ground immediately to retaliate, and stating, that though they had before been restrained by Mr. Cameron and myself, from revenging themselves for past offences, yet they considered further forbearance, after this fresh and most unjustifiable outrage, as cowardly, and pregnant with great danger to their lives and

liberty. The flame was now kindled, and in less than half an hour every Half-breed on the ground, many of whom were boys, were mounted on horseback. In conjunction with the other gentlemen present, I remonstrated with them, and represented the imminent danger they would be exposed to, from the fortified buildings and artillery of the other party, as well as from their own weakness in numbers, &c. But all expostulations, and all attempts at command, were in vain. "They had," they said, "been grossly insulted and injured, and would no longer submit to such treatment; they did not want the assistance of the Canadians, but would now act separately and for themselves." Our Canadians, who were present, shewed an inclination to follow the Half-breeds, but were soon reduced to order, and not a single individual coming under the appellation of a white man, was allowed to stir from the camp. Yet some of Lord Selkirk's creatures have attested upon oath, and caused a warrant to be issued for my apprehension, on the allegation that I was the leader of the Brulés, in the skirmish that took place between them and the Colonists on the 11th June, on which subject I beg to refer to the affidavits of Mr. Alan M'Donell, and Mr. John Siveright.

I do not pretend to say, that none of the people in Mr. Cameron's Fort came out on

hearing the firing between the Brulés and the Colonists on that day, but I can, with confidence, affirm, that if they did so, it was from an apprehension that the Colonists had again attacked some of our people on their way from or to the fort.

Miles was then busy in his plans to escape from arrest by the constable, and was the more anxious to get off, as the time of the year was approaching, when it was customary for the canoes of the North-West Company to pass with the returns of the season to Lake Superior, but with the intention of returning when we had left the country, to continue his hostile and oppressive conduct against us in our absence. In order, however, to draw a closer line to prevent his escape, a ditch was dug as near the Settlement as we could, of some length, and deep enough to screen people from any fire from his fortifications at the government-house, &c. and Miles, finding that the party supporting the constable, were too watchful to afford him any prospect of escape, at length surrendered himself. Had he done this when first legally arrested, and submitted his defence for all the seizures and aggressions of which he had been the author, to a competent tribunal, the question of his right, or that of his employer, would have been quietly decided. He was determined, however, to persevere in his attempts to maintain it by force,

and the resistance occasioned by his interference with the rights and properties of the Half-breeds and Natives, occasioned in this instance the first dispersion of the Colony.

After the quarrels and encounters which had taken place, and having been disappointed in their prospects, and disgusted with the conduct of the Governor, it was no matter of surprise, that most of the Colonists should desire to leave the country; and certainly, after what had taken place, there was no indisposition on our part to afford them the means of transport to Upper Canada.

The burning of some buildings afterwards, and the dispersion of the few Settlers who remained, was entirely the act of the injured and irritated Half-breeds, who now considered the Colony as hostile to their tranquillity.

The Canadians were very far from interfering to aid the dispersion of these Settlers, after the arrest and departure of Miles M'Donell. On the contrary, when the horned cattle were driven up towards our establishment by the Half-breeds to be slaughtered, with some difficulty I got them sent back immediately without injury, and the Colonists conveyed them away in safety, a few days after.

After Miles's departure, Mr. James Sutherland of the Hudson's Bay Company, and Mr. White, late Surgeon of the Colony, requested a confer-

ence with the Half-breeds, and, as representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company and of Lord Selkirk, proposed terms to a considerable body of them, who met in council in the Plains with some Indians.

The purport of those proposals was, as related to me afterwards, to the following effect:

"That the Settlers then present should remain in quiet and peaceable possession of some points of strong woods below the Forks, should cultivate the same, but make no settlement in any part of Red River without obtaining leave from the Indians and Half-breeds, and paying annual rents to them jointly; that neither Half-breeds nor Indians should in future be prohibited by proclamation or otherwise from following their usual mode of hunting, nor be looked on as under the jurisdiction, or subject to the laws of the Colony, unless at their own request; and that the past state of warfare should be buried in oblivion."

Had this line of conduct been pursued at the commencement of the Settlement, no such negotiation would have been necessary, but now the Brulés would come to no terms, except the immediate departure of the Colonists, which they engaged should be allowed with perfect safety, and without the slightest injury from them. They were moreover so tenacious of their rights, that they prohibited the Hudson's Bay Traders from

entering the Red River the ensuing autumn, with more than a certain number of boats, for the purposes of trade alone; and this was fully understood by them to have been promised by Mr. Sutherland. The Indians present concurred with the Half-breeds, and wished that the Hudson's Bay Traders alone should return, and no Colonists. It is very probable that, with their usual duplicity, some of them might afterwards express themselves favourably towards the Settlers, with an expectation of obtaining presents of spirituous liquors, tobacco, and ammunition, from the agents of the Colony, on their way to Jack River. But had they, as a body, been friendly to, or regretted the departure of the Settlers, they would not have withdrawn, when a strong body of them were encamped at Miles M'Donell's house, who could easily, if they had been so disposed, have checked the Half-breeds in any attempt to disperse them; nor would they have joined in the council with the Brulés, or insisted upon the immediate departure of the Colonists, or have given out in their harangues, "that the garden-makers spoiled and besmeared their lands."

At the succeeding general meeting at Fort William, Mr. Cameron was, unfortunately for himself, reinstated in his joint charge of the Red River district; but he had positive injunctions from his Partners to be guarded, cautious, and

prudent, and to avoid all collision with his Lordship's Agents and Settlers; and it was found expedient that I should conduct the provision posts of Upper Red River as usual.

We left Fort William together, and on our arrival in Red River, in September 1815, found Mr. Colin Robertson there, who had brought back the remaining Settlers who had retired to Jack River. We had not time to change our linen, before a messenger from this gentleman made his appearance at our fort, with some papers sent by him to our clerk, Mr. John Sive-right: these papers purported to be the abstract of a Letter from the Earl of Selkirk, with the opinions of some of the most eminent Lawyers in England, respecting the validity of the Hudson's Bay Charter, and their powers of jurisdiction, &c. The documents, as intended by Mr. Robertson, were handed both to Mr. Cameron and to me for our perusal, after which they were instantly returned to him.

We soon learnt, from undoubted authority, that Mr. Robertson was determined to follow the example set by his predecessor; and his conversation and conduct satisfied us of his hostile disposition towards the North-West Company, and particularly towards Mr. Cameron. The lower classes of the people, and the natives, were told, that it would be useless to offer any resistance to the additional force which was sent by Lord Sel-



kirk from Hudson's Bay and Canada to assert his rights, as established by the legal opinions Mr. Robertson had published on his arrival in the country; and although Mr. Cameron was of opinion, from his former acquaintance with Mr. Robertson, that his threats and bombastic language only resulted from a warm imagination, and his desire of being thought a man of importance in the employ of the Earl of Selkirk, I dreaded the result, from my experience of former violences.

The common routine of our business made it necessary for me to proceed to the Upper Red River provision posts, and as much dispatch as possible was used in sending off the canoes and goods for those places. The day of my departure for Qu' Appelle, a message was delivered to me, with Mr. Robertson's compliments, that he desired an interview with me on the common high road. Both the manner and the place appointed for our interview, I must confess, astonished me, but I went unattended, and met him at the rendezvous, attended by an armed servant on horseback. The conversation that took place was partly on subjects of a private nature: in that relating to the state of parties, although Mr. Robertson made use of much abusive language towards my colleague, Mr. Cameron, which was painful to my feelings, he was not so violent as I expected on other points, and he will have the

candour to allow, that I strongly recommended to him conciliatory manners towards his neighbours, and towards all classes of people, as an object much wished for by us, requisite for the restoration of order and tranquillity throughout the Red River, and by far the surest way of securing success to his present undertaking.

It may not be amiss here to observe, that Mr. Robertson and I entered the North-West Company's service together as apprentice clerks in 1803, and were then in habits of intimacy.

Mr. Duncan Cameron remained in charge of the post at the Forks of Red River, called Fort Gibraltar, with some people to carry on the trade, and established a couple of small out-posts, one at Pembina River, in charge of Bostonnois Pangman, the other at White River, Manatoo-waupang Lake, under the management of Mr. John Siveright, with a few men. The Qu' Appelle post, where all the provisions for the outgoing Company's servants, and part of those for incoming servants, are collected, and a small post at River la Souris, were under my direction; yet, from the nature of our business, the posts of both Upper and Lower Red River, can not go on without dependance upon each other, and frequent communications between them: and it was peculiarly unfortunate that I had left, owing to the low state of the water in the communication to Qu' Appelle, a quantity of goods intended

for the provision trade, at Mr. Cameron's post at the Forks.

In the month of October I received intelligence from the Forks, of violences committed by Mr. Robertson and his followers, on the persons of Messrs. Cameron, Lamar, and Charles Hess. While Mr. Cameron and Mr. Seraphim Lamar were peaceably riding on a Sunday along the road on their way home, they were waylaid by Mr. Alexander McLean, one Bourke, and one Heyden, who presented loaded pistols to them, and threatened them with instant death, if they did not immediately surrender themselves prisoners, and follow them to Mr. Robertson's post, now called Fort Douglas: these threats were followed by expressions and actions, on the part of Bourke and Heyden, unworthy of being recorded, and only becoming such characters. The gentlemen, without means of resistance, were obliged to comply, and were conducted to Fort Douglas, where they were confined close prisoners, under an armed guard. They repeatedly desired to see the authority under which they were deprived of their liberty, and their lives were endangered. As neither warrant, nor any shadow of legal right could be produced, a bare-faced falsehood was invented by Robertson and his associates, who asserted that the Half-breeds at River Qu' Appelle had cut off the Hudson's Bay post there, and killed one man and wounded

another. In retaliation for this, Mr. Cameron and Mr. Lamar were to be sent off immediately, as prisoners, to Hudson's Bay; and the fort or establishment, under the charge of the former, was to be taken immediate possession of. To accomplish the latter purpose, it was requisite to have recourse to stratagem, and a body of armed Colonists were sent upon this expedition, with Mr. Lamar, whom they severely threatened, if, on approaching the fort, he gave any alarm to the few servants within. They entered the fort with fixed bayonets, and the honest Canadians, who, it being Sunday evening, were smoking their pipes in their houses, were surprised and made prisoners. Mr. Alexander M'Lean and Bourke were the leaders on this occasion, and much exultation was expressed, that the fort was taken without any loss of lives on their part.

The warehouse and stores were opened and rummaged, and a waste of property, of course, ensued, and spirituous liquors were issued by Mr. M'Lean and Bourke to their followers. Bourke acted as *Ensign* under *Captain* M'Lean on this occasion. Peremptory orders were given to all the North-West Company's servants in the fort, to get their canoes in readiness, and quit it without loss of time. They were at a loss how to act; but although prisoners, they came to a resolution of remaining till forcibly turned out.

Mr. Cameron's store of spirits and shrub were too tempting, for the Captain and Ensign of this party to refrain from making a free use of, and scenes ensued which are too shameful to be related.

Mr. Cameron was afterwards conducted back to his fort under a guard, to be sent off the following day, together with Messrs. Lamar, and Charles Hess, to Hudson's Bay, and they had bayonets at their breasts every step they moved. In fact, the next morning they were embarked in a boat for this destination, but, on their arrival at Fort Douglas, were landed, and in result, liberated by Mr. Robertson.

Private, as well as the Company's property, suffered on this occasion, and two small iron cannon were taken away by Robertson and his party. Throughout these outrageous proceedings no warrant, either for the apprehension of persons, or for the search after property, was, or could, be produced.

The allegation, that the Settlement was then in actual danger from the North-West Company, is a mere after-thought. The true motive for these and the subsequent outrages was, at that early period, apparent from Mr. Robertson's unreserved avowal of his intention, to make use of his own words, "of razing to the ground, " every establishment and trading post belonging to the North-West Company within the

" territories claimed by the Hudson's Bay Company." Mr. Cameron, however, whose fort was first to meet the fate so early announced, by some unfortunate infatuation, was lulled into a state of security, and, unhappily for himself, took no precautions to avert the blow he afterwards received.

About this period, the late Mr. Robert Semple, appointed Governor-in-chief for the Hudson's Bay Company, arrived in Red River with some Settlers lately from Europe, and an addition of men and goods for the Hudson's Bay Traders.

From the favourable representations made of this gentleman's character and abilities, added to his being invested with authority both over all the Agents of the Colony and the Traders, a lively hope was entertained that, under his influence, peace and tranquillity would be universally restored between all parties in the country. Such hopes were, however, but too soon destroyed ; the late violences committed by Robertson, seemed to meet with his entire approbation and countenance ; and it appeared, his zeal and abilities would be devoted to support all the pretensions which were disputed by the Canadian Traders and their dependants, and which had, in fact, led to all the collisions which had previously taken place.

The Settlers brought in by Mr. Semple, proceeded under the command of Mr. Alexander

M'Donald to Fort Daer, where it was supposed they might procure the means of subsistence with more ease than at the Forks.

As soon as the winter set in, Robertson paid a visit to Fort Daer, and did not neglect visiting also the North-West Company's post at Pembina River, under Bostonnois Pangman, whom he endeavoured to seduce from his duty, by offering him a high salary, and the Canadians under his command were likewise attempted to be inveigled from their employers' service. Finding his offers ineffectual, he had recourse to serious threats towards Bostonnois, but this Bois-brulé was one whose integrity was not to be bent, and Robertson returned a few days afterwards to Fort Douglas, without effecting his object.

In all Robertson's communications with the different parties, and particularly with Mr. Cameron, whom he frequently pestered with visits at Fort Gibraltar, he appeared anxious to expatiate on the power entrusted to him, as succeeding Miles M'Donell in his Government of Assiniboine, and the determination of Governor Semple and himself to establish the right of jurisdiction of the Hudson's Bay Company in Red River and throughout the country; their avowed intention of enforcing with the utmost rigour all the powers granted them by the Char-

ter of Charles II. and he invariably maintained that the ruin, or rather the annihilation of the North-West Company, must be the unavoidable ultimate result of these proceedings.

As a sign of the hostile feeling that existed at Fort Douglas against to the North-West Company, Mr. Seraphim Lamar, and another person, having, by invitation, paid a visit to some of the principal people there on New Year's Day 1816, were, on leaving the door of Mr. Semple's house, assailed by a set of ruffians, and escaped with difficulty with their lives, after receiving several blows with clubs, seemingly prepared for the purpose.

Mr. Semple having established himself in his station, now considered it necessary to strike some decisive blow in Upper Red River, to intimidate our servants, and gain the confidence of his own men; and having selected a body of Colonists, and an officer of the late Voltigeurs, he proceeded with them to my hut at Qu' Appelle, and in my absence endeavoured to obtain possession of our property there, by seducing those left in charge of it. A note was written by him to Mr. Grant, who was entrusted in my absence with the care of the post, and conveyed by Messrs. Pambrun and M'Kay, who used ineffectually all their efforts to persuade Mr. Grant to submit to the demands of the Governor.



Mr. Grant, however, was not so easily persuaded, and sent in reply this verbal message to Mr. Semple: "Come and take it, you shall meet the reception from me which such conduct will deserve." Though weak in numerical strength, compared with the combined force of Semple and Mr. James Sutherland, Grant, by his vigilance and resolute conduct, kept Semple's party at bay till my return about the 12th February, when, after the interchange of a letter with me, the attempt was abandoned by them.

About this period Mr. Duncan Cameron, having been for some time desirous of seeing the Pembina River country, and the Assiniboine tribe of Indians, and after many solicitations from me, paid me a visit at Qu' Appelle; but notwithstanding the state of affairs, and the gloomy aspect they wore, particularly in the Lower Red River, he could not be prevailed upon to make a long stay at my post. Before he left me, we addressed a joint letter to the Partners of the North-West Company, to the northward, containing an account of the violences and robberies of Robertson in the fall, and the apprehension of further acts of aggression towards spring, advising as a measure of precaution, the sending a few active engages from Fort des Prairies, to assist in case of need in the preservation of the Company's property.

Mr. Semple, who was also at Qu' Appelle, took his departure the very same day with Mr. Cameron, but stopped at River la Souris, half way to the Forks, with one Peter Fidler, the Hudson's Bay Trader there, being a central situation, from whence he could direct the execution of the plans for the destruction of our trade in the spring, which had been for some time arranged, and decided upon, by him and his colleagues.

In March, soon after the departure of Mr. Cameron, the North-West Company's winter express (bearing also dispatches from the Pacific Ocean) with private letters to individuals in Canada, reached me at Qu' Appelle, by the ordinary route from the Northern Departments. By this express, I learnt the dreadful calamities which had befallen the party sent by Lord Selkirk to the Athabasca country, for want of proper arrangement and management on the part of their leaders; and that the survivors of this ill-fated expedition, owed their escape from the fate which had befallen their companions, to the humanity of our people in that country\*.

\* These people had been sent from Canada, where they were engaged by *Lord Selkirk's Agents*, for the purpose of opposing the North-West Company's Trade in the distant posts, to which the Hudson's Bay Company had never penetrated. No precautions having been taken to provide provisions, about twenty men were either starved to death, or

After preparing my own dispatches to the Agents and Proprietors of the North-West Company, giving them, as usual, a detail of the success of the winter's trade, I dispatched two men to convey the budget to our clerk, Andrew Poiras, at River la Souris, to be forwarded with due expedition to Mr. Cameron at the Forks; but on the arrival of the express at this post, on the 19th March, 1816, it was intercepted, and the letters broken open, read, and detained by Robertson and his party.

Towards the latter end of March, or the beginning of April, Mr. John Siveright arrived at Qu' Appelle, with intelligence of the capture of Fort Gibraltar, our post at the Forks, and gave me a minute and correct detail of all the outrages committed by Robertson and his associates on the 17th of March, as well as certain information of the like measures being intended against the post at Pembina.

Mr. Cameron was again made prisoner, and, after a considerable imprisonment at Fort Gibraltar, was sent down with every mark of indignity to the Bay, from whence he was forwarded

devoured by their companions, who saved themselves by this dreadful alternative. It would be curious to hear the explanation given by Lord Selkirk's friends, who alledge he never had objects of trade in view of this unfortunate expedition. Was it sent to establish a Colony on the Athabasca, or Slave Lakes?

in confinement to England ; but, on his arrival there, could neither obtain the satisfaction of a trial for any imputed offence, or the means of obtaining reparation for the injury he sustained ; as the unfortunate Mr. Semple, by whose orders he was so treated, was the only person against whom, in the first instance, he could have instituted proceedings.

The principal actor in these scenes of rapine wrote me an epistle, wherein he informed me of his intention to dispute the ground by inches, &c. &c. Mr. Siveright was also the bearer of a letter from Mr. Semple, who gave his sanction to the robberies of his colleague, and informed me, that Mr. Robertson's letter, which announced the aggressions he had committed, happily needed no comment.

It is more easy to conceive, particularly by those acquainted with the situation of the country, than for me to describe, the state of my feelings on this trying occasion. I saw my partner and colleague imprisoned, his life endangered, his private property and the property of the Company pillaged ; their servants dispersed, and whatever remained of their effects throughout Lower Red River, ready to share the same fate. I beheld public and private letters broken open, unblushingly read, and their distorted contents converted into a pretext even

for so doing. I saw, nay my enemies informed me themselves, that the communication was stopped, and obstructed by fortifications strengthened with artillery. I saw myself in a great degree destitute of even the means of preserving my own post; neither fusils nor ammunition, and only a slender force, in comparison with the combined forces of Lord Selkirk and the Hudson's Bay Traders; and in perspective the lives of five hundred of the North-West Company's servants in the interior, together with the valuable returns of the season, at the mercy of Semple and his confederates.

It was my duty, therefore, to take whatever steps I lawfully could, for the preservation of the property under my charge. I consequently, with as little delay as possible, stated briefly, in a general letter to the Partners to the northward of Red River, the state of their affairs in that department; the necessity of sending forward with all possible expedition some of the most active men; Half-breeds and others, with a supply of arms and ammunition, for the defence of the depôt of provisions at Qu' Appelle, Robertson having captured the greater part of those stores in the lower posts; apprising them also of the danger they ran of being captured by an armed vessel equipped to cruise in Lake Winnipeg, for that purpose, under the command of one Holte.

By the return of Mr. Siveright to Lower Red River, I wrote to Colin Robertson and to Mr. Semple, expressing my astonishment at their conduct, claiming the immediate restitution of the forts and property taken and plundered, and referring at the same time the imprisonment of Mr. Cameron, and his clerks and men, with other former acts of aggression, to the decision of courts of justice.

Prudence made it necessary to put the fort of Qu' Appelle in as good a posture of defence as circumstances would permit. As little time as possible was lost in so doing, and a constant guard was kept, to prevent surprise.

I wrote also to Mr. John Macdonald of Swan River, being the nearest department whence assistance could be expected, requesting that he would communicate with all possible dispatch to Mr. J. D. Campbell, the critical and alarming state of the North-West Company's affairs in Red River, and begged Mr. Macdonald to urge without delay every means Mr. Campbell could afford for my relief. Mr. Macdonald did not lose a moment's time, after receiving these accounts, in sending off a couple of active men to Cumberland-house department, and wrote Mr. Campbell, urging him to send forward all the assistance he could procure.

The first news after the departure of Mr. Siveright, confirmed his statement of the danger in

which our post at Pembina River stood. That place, with the clerks, interpreters, furs, merchandize, papers, books of accounts, &c. fell a sacrifice to the Hudson's Bay freebooters, about the 20th of March, as detailed in the affidavit of Joseph Jourdain and others then present. The clerks, interpreters, and part of the men taken at Pembina, were imprisoned at Fort Daer, under the command of Mr. Alexander Macdonald, and, after being confined some time, were conducted by Messrs. Pambrun and M'Leod, with a party of armed men, down to the Forks, and there imprisoned with their late employer, Mr. Cameron, in his former establishment, Fort Gibraltar.

It is not irrelevant here to observe, that Mr. Cameron, Alexander Fraser, Seraphim Lamar, Charles Hess, Peter Pangman, and others, who were kept prisoners by Robertson and Semple, would have suffered even a want of the common necessities of life, had it not been for the active exertions of the Canadian clerk acting for the North-West Company at the River Winnipeg, who from time to time, contrived to send supplies of provisions to his employer and others suffering with him.

About this time I learnt that some weak and credulous servants of the North-West Company, who had been taken prisoners by Robertson at the Forks, had consented, in order to procure

their liberation from close confinement, to perform the servile offices necessary for the support of the gang who did garrison duty in the fort of their masters; and Robertson set a few of the common men at liberty to shift for themselves and their families. At length also, in consequence of strong remonstrances from the Indians, Mr. Seraphim Lamar and Peter Pangman were released from prison, and made their way to La Souris River; and in fact, all those who were disposed to remain faithful to their employers, came to Upper Red River as soon as, by any chance, they got freed from bondage.

In the beginning of May, when the ice breaks up in Red River, and when, consequently, the period arrived when the North-West Company's boats, with provisions from Qu' Appelle, might be expected to pass the Forks, the Commanders of Fort Gibraltar and Fort Douglas put every thing in motion for blockading the water-communication, strongly fortifying the key of the river, as Mr. Robertson truly called it. Their Colony-servants had been regularly trained and disciplined to the use of great guns, as well as exercised with the musquet and bayonet. Several brass pieces of cannon were mounted on carriages for field duty, and a number of others planted so as completely to command the river. Officers were selected and appointed to command



the men in different divisions. The decked vessel on Lake Winnipic was given in command to Lieut. Holte, with which, according to his own words, "he was to give the damned Canadians a rough handling." All being thus prepared, the Commander of the Key of Red River thought proper to make trial of the zeal, spirit, and dexterity of the blockading party under his command, in sinking craft as they passed his fortifications. For this purpose, he secretly caused an old boat to be set adrift in the dusk of the evening, higher up the river than the garrison, so as to deceive his troops into a belief that it was one of the North-West Company's boats from Qu' Appelle, loaded with provisions; and as the boat drifted down he called his troops to arms, announcing the approach of a North-West Company's boat. They rushed out without further orders, and commenced a heavy fire of musquetry on the boat as she dropt by, and they received many encomiums from their commanders for their ardour and activity.

Previous to the departure of the Hudson's Bay Traders from Qu' Appelle, Mr. Pambrun arrived there with a select body of armed men. Their hostile intentions towards our establishment were undisguised; but on the very day, nay, the very hour, that Pambrun joined his colleague Sutherland, I received nearly an equal number of men

from Cumberland-house department. They were eight or nine in number, chiefly Half-breeds, who had volunteered their services in our defence. Pambrun and Sutherland now, with their combined forces, judged it rather dangerous to make an attack on my post ; but probably also, they considered, that as Robertson was in possession of the Key of the River, the depôt of provisions at Qu' Appelle, under my care, must unavoidably fall at last into their hands.

Perceiving the blind and rash system I had thus to contend with, I nevertheless determined to make another effort to obtain the restitution of our forts and property, and, if possible, to reconcile matters to such a degree, that law should decide between us.

An interview I had with Mr. James Sutherland for this purpose was ineffectual, and he refused to write his superiors to second my representations and admonitions for peace. I pursued, however, my object, and wrote both to Semple and Robertson, in terms which I vainly hoped would prevent further disturbances. A gentleman was sent with these dispatches, with instructions not only to remonstrate, but to negotiate for peace ; but the bearer was treated with contempt, and my letters were considered as dictated by fear, and a consciousness of inability to parry the blow intended to be aimed against

the concern. Thus were my pacific overtures rejected, and I received for answer, a threat "that a blow would be struck, that would resound from Athabasca to Montreal."

On the day that Messrs. Pambrun and Sutherland took their departure with their property from Qu' Appelle River, to proceed to the Forks (the blockading station) the people at my post proposed the detention of their provisions, until the restitution of Fort Gibraltar; alleging with truth, that if all the Hudson's Bay provisions got safe to the Forks, it was evident that the lives of the numerous servants of the North-West Company would be endangered, and their property become an easy sacrifice to the plans of our enemy. I endeavoured to repress the ardour of the men for adopting this plan, and also told Mr. Sutherland, that I would use my endeavours with all about me, to prevent any molestation to him or his effects, provided we received no further accounts from below, of a perseverance on the part of Governor Semple, in his avowed determination to cut off our communication with Lake Winnipic, and the canoes expected from the interior; but that in that case, though painful in the extreme, I could not venture to restrain the people on our side, from adopting at length active measures, for their own preservation as well as that of their countrymen.

Mr. Sutherland, and his colleague Pambrun,

left Qu' Appelle about the 8th of May, in boats, with a general supply of provisions for the blockading party under Semple and Robertson, at Forts Douglas and Gibraltar. On or about the evening of the 11th of May a person arrived, who, having been in charge of a trading-post of the North-West Company, had been plundered of the furs and merchandize under his care, his life seriously endangered, and himself and part of his people imprisoned, but who had contrived to escape. The story he related, formed a complete confirmation of the openly avowed intentions on the part of Semple and Robertson, to continue their system of seizure, plunder, and imprisonment, and that they were very far from having any intention or desire of coming to an amicable understanding with the representatives of the North-West Company. It appeared, on the contrary, that their late successes had elevated their spirits, and stimulated them, by means of the decked vessel under Holte, supported by other armed craft, to attempt the seizure or destruction of the North-West Company's canoes in Lake Winnipic, with all the valuable returns of the season; and Robertson made no secret of his intention to erect a battery at the entrance of the River Winnipic, in the Lake of that name, in order to capture or destroy any canoes or property that might escape from Holte.

No relief could possibly be obtained from any

competent authority to decide between the parties, and the rapid strides of the Hudson's Bay people towards our destruction, admitted of no further delay. Accordingly the detention of the provisions intended for Semple and Robertson's blockading garrisons was determined on as a measure of self-preservation, with the intention of keeping them carefully to be delivered up again to the Hudson's Bay Agents, after the North-West Company had been extricated from their perilous situation.

Sutherland and Pambrun gave up their provisions and arms to a number of our men, not much, if at all, exceeding theirs, and not the slightest injury was done to a single individual of the party, who were detained at Qu' Appelle. Mr. Sutherland had not been guilty of any act of violence which could justify detention or imprisonment, and he consequently experienced no constraint or confinement during the space of half an hour, or thereabouts, he remained in my house; nor did I ever order him to be brought there. He returned with his clerk, with their arms, to their own establishment at Qu' Appelle; and, with the exception of the musquets and bayonets, the property was not taken to the North-West Company's Fort.

Mr. Pambrun had been an active accessory in the unlawful imprisonment of several individuals

in Lower Red River, and had, on all occasions, shewn himself a ready instrument in the aggressions of Semple. The body of men under his command had also been guilty of serious crimes, and it was thought justifiable and legal to detain him and them until the arrival of competent authority in the River. All, however, that was required of Mr. Pambrun on this occasion, was his word of honour that he would not abscond from appearing before a Justice of the Peace for the Indian Territory, and he remained with me during the spring, more as a companion than a prisoner.

The common men who were brought back from the boats, were certainly put under restraint, and though afterwards liberated, I consider myself blameable for so doing. They were men who had committed, or joined in the robberies and other violences that had taken place in Red River, and were then on their way to join their associates and commanders; they however affected to lament the part they had been led to act in the depredations committed by the Hudson's Bay Agents, and proposed to bind themselves, by oath, to refrain from a similar line of conduct in future. I told them I was by no means qualified or empowered to administer oaths, but since they appeared to entertain a due sense of the impropriety of their

conduct, I would keep them under no restraint, and only take from them a promise in writing, for their future good and peaceable behaviour. This was done, and a boat was given them, with other articles necessary for their voyage, and as they represented that the Colonists were in want of provisions, fifteen bags of pemican were sent for their support. The Hudson's Bay pemican and effects detained, remained (with the exception of what was sent to the Colony) at the spot where they were given up, and Mr. Sutherland was repeatedly requested to take a correct inventory of them, which he declined, alleging that he had one in his possession.

As soon as the provisions and other returns were got ready, and the boats prepared, I proceeded with them, and the people collected for their protection, to endeavour to join, if possible, my associates from the northward. The pemican detained was embarked in the Hudson's Bay boats, to be taken with us, that it might, as before said, be restored, after a termination of the existing disturbances.

The assertion, that Mr. Pambrun, on leaving Qu' Appelle, was sent down in a boat as prisoner, is false; he rode his horse, and joined in the sports of the chase on the journey, which he appeared to relish, nor was he under the least restraint or controul.

It is customary for the North-West Company

to build boats for the conveyance of their provisions traded at Qu' Appelle to Bas de la Riviere, and nothing occurred out of the ordinary routine of our business on this occasion, except collecting an additional number of men from the surrounding departments, which had become indispensably necessary, from the threatening aspect of affairs, for the security of our lives and property.

Meeting, at the Forks of Qu' Appelle River, with a number of Indians of the Saulteux and Cree tribes, who were no strangers to the outrages, and further intentions of the Hudson's Bay Agents, and giving them some supplies, I judged it expedient to explain to them, as far as lay in my power, the cause of the present disturbances between the two concerns. I was induced to take this step, from the certain knowledge, that the doctrine and constant language of our adversaries, had rendered part of these Indians hostile to us; and I was not without apprehension, that the result might prove serious to the people I had left to pass the summer at my post. I therefore described to them the origin and progress of the present contest, stating the unfounded claims of the Hudson's Bay Company, which they had attempted to enforce, by the expulsion of all the Canadian Traders, from what they falsely called their territories or lands; that in the prosecution of their designs,



they had been engaged in a successful career of pillage and rapine, during the whole winter, in the course of which, trading posts had been robbed and plundered, and then razed to the ground, their old traders made prisoners, without cause, their friends and relations treated with cruelty and oppression, and the supplies intended for their use, intercepted and plundered in the most wanton manner. That the Canadians, who had established themselves in the country, and traded with their fathers, before the English were ever heard of in the Red River, had always considered the natives as the lawful owners of the soil; that we were determined never to admit the claims of the Hudson's Bay Company, or to submit to their attempts to enforce them, and that if we were again attacked at the Forks, we would resist, and defend ourselves to the last; and if any of them chose to accompany us, if a quarrel should take place, they would have the opportunity of judging who were the aggressors.

A few young men, Indians and Half-breeds, riding by the Hudson's Bay establishment under the command of Peter Fidler (Brandon-house), entered the fort, and pilfered some articles of little or no value, without my knowledge; and some tobacco was afterwards found at a distance from the fort, an article of which, our servants and Indians had, for some time past, been wholly de-

prived, by the robberies committed below, and this was distributed to those who stood in need of it.

On the second day after this transaction, I understood that Fidler, at the time the party were taking from him these articles, (consisting principally of a few pounds of raisins, &c. &c., a list of what was taken having been sent by Mr. Fidler, there can be no doubt about their value), offered them some bundles of furs, which they would not accept; and as I now heard of the departure of Robertson for Hudson's Bay, with the valuable furs which had been plundered from us at the lower posts, losing thus all prospect of recovering our property, I sent a young gentleman alone to Brandon-house, to ask Mr. Fidler if he would deliver these furs to me, on condition that they should be hereafter valued, and set off against an equal value of ours which Robertson had conveyed to Hudson's Bay. The fairness of this proposal struck Fidler very forcibly, and he sent over to me the furs requested without hesitation, and afterwards sent a packing account of them in his own handwriting.

I have omitted to mention, that the North-West Company's post, and the Hudson's Bay establishment (Brandon-house) at River la Souris, are separated by the Assiniboine River; and that the young lads who took away Fidler's

raisins, &c. were riding down, escorting the provisions, on the side of the river where the Hudson's Bay establishment was, the road on that side being then only practicable for horses.

From the moment our boats with the provisions, &c. left Qu' Appelle, daily apprehensions were entertained of an attack from Lower Red River, and as the number of people I had, admitted of their being divided, I formed them into two parties, and from 25 to 30 men, chiefly active Brulés, rode on horseback in company with myself and other gentlemen, keeping constantly in sight of the craft, and always encamping together, and in our way down the river I omitted no precautions to guard against surprise.

Two days previous to our arrival at Portage des Prairies, we were informed by an Indian from Fort Douglas, that a strong body of armed men, with a field-piece, had marched under one of their officers from the Forks, to take post at Portage des Prairies, in order to intercept our convoy, which induced us to halt for some time. I dispatched an express to the craft (the country in the neighbourhood not admitting of an escort accompanying them along the banks of the river), to warn them of their danger; and a small party was also sent next morning, to ascertain the truth of the information given, but at Portage des Prairies, instead of enemies, they

fortunately met with friends. Mr. John Siveright, and a few Canadians who had wintered with him, and some others who had been seized and imprisoned by Semple and Robertson, and had lately recovered their liberty, had made their way towards the nearest post of the Company, and my mind was relieved from much anxiety by this meeting with our friends, as I dreaded extremely any collision with the Hudson's Bay people.

About the sixteenth of June I arrived at Portage des Prairies, and my craft the day after. Mr. Siveright had arrived on the 9th, and was equally relieved by our junction, having been in constant fear of being attacked and pillaged of his returns by parties from below.

I was much disappointed here, at receiving no accounts of the arrival from the northward of any of the Partners of the North-West Company at the entrance of the River Winnipic, where we have an establishment, and where the provisions collected in Red River are annually stored, and issued out, as they pass, to the different brigades of canoes, for the subsistence of the people till they reach Lake Superior. The season was far advanced, and the period when they in general pass, and receive the supplies at Bas de la Riviere for their voyage out, being expired, my anxiety for their safety became extreme. I came therefore to the determination of

dispatching an Indian, who could speak French, with a letter to my associates, briefly describing the state of their affairs in Red River, and earnestly urging the presence of one or more of them, to aid and advise as to the measures to be adopted for extricating their concern from the difficulty and embarrassment in which it was placed. I warned them also of the danger to be apprehended in passing up the River, from the ambushes and batteries laid and placed by Semple and Robertson, advising them to avoid passing by the ordinary water communication, but to make a circuitous tour by land, so as to avoid any collision with these people. The Indian who was the bearer of this note was directed to proceed to Bas de la Riviere, and to remain there till he could deliver it: he expressed much fear of being molested by "the bad garden-makers," but his attachment to the Canadians occasioned him to undertake this arduous expedition.

The day after our arrival at Portage des Prairies, it was thought expedient to use the customary precaution of unloading and examining both provisions and furs, and the whole was found to be in great need of airing, and in fact of a complete new arrangement in the batteaux and canoes. It was moreover desirable to make out accurate inventories, &c. of the various property under my charge, to produce in case of

its being captured or destroyed, of which there was such imminent hazard.

I was induced by several motives of a serious nature; to prolong my stay at Portage des Prairies for some time. The first, and the one that had most weight with me, was my rooted aversion to encounter the Hudson's Bay people, which would be the result of an attempt to pass the North-West Company's property by the ordinary and only water communication. I was fully aware of the feelings which existed amongst my own people, and their determination firmly to resist all further acts of aggression; and I was also aware of the mad spirit of depredation which Semple and his subordinate agents had carefully excited among their followers. Nor was I so regardless of the lives of those protecting the effects under my charge, as rashly to expose them to destruction, by the fire of the artillery placed to intercept our passage; besides the value of the property itself, which was to a large amount, and upon the preservation of the provision part of which, depended the lives of hundreds of our people, as well as the transport of the whole of our trade, I also flattered myself, notwithstanding the past conduct of Mr. Semple, that the arrival in Red River of one or more Partners of the North-West Company, and their remonstrances against the illegality of his pro-

ceedings, and efforts to negotiate a peace, might yet alter his views, and induce him to abstain from further hostility. I was determined to avoid a nearer approach to the Forks of Red River, for fear of the disagreeable consequences which would undoubtedly arise from any attempt to seize our persons and property, and wait patiently as long as possible for the arrival of some of the Partners. The distance between Portage des Prairies and the Settlement, is computed to be about 60 miles, nor would I probably have approached so near the Colony, before the arrival, or at least advice from some of my colleagues, if I had not been apprehensive, that if we had stopped at a greater distance up the river, we should not have been able to have got the loaded boats and canoes out, on account of the lowness of the water which the advance of the season would produce, and the many shoals throughout the Assiniboine River; and particularly from River la Souris to Portage des Prairies.

As soon therefore as the furs and provisions were dried and assorted, I caused both to be piled in a square round our encampment, which formed a kind of breast-work, and a tolerable shelter against small arms; and for further security, two small swivels were placed at the angles; and these measures of precaution shew that I was acting on the defensive, and in dread of being attacked and plundered in my station.



Having found a band of Indians at Portage des Prairies, we bartered some peltries with them, a small present was given to them, and I explained to them also the cause of the existing disturbances and broils in Red River.

The Indian sent down with the letter, had been instructed to desire any of the Canadian free-hunters, or the North-West Company's servants who might have escaped or been liberated from confinement, and were living with the Indians in the neighbourhood, to contrive to join us at Portage des Prairies, with any intelligence they could obtain respecting the arrival of the North-West canoes in Lake Winnipic, and respecting the conduct pursued, and further preparations made by the blockading garrisons of Semple and his associates; but no one arrived from the Forks as expected, which was a confirmation of the river being obstructed by the armed parties of the Hudson's Bay Company, so as totally to prevent any communication between us and our people in Lake Winnipic.

The dreadful state of fear, suspense, and anxiety, under which indeed I had laboured ever since the renewed depredations of the Hudson's Bay Agents in March, was much increased by want of intelligence at this critical moment; and after full consideration and consultation with the gentlemen with me, respecting our whole situation, all concurred in opinion, as to the



necessity of endeavouring to send some provisions for the subsistence of our people, who by this time must be arriving at the entrance of the River, and who would be prevented from passing up, by the complete blockade which was established.

These considerations induced me, on the evening of the 17th June, to order Cuthbert Grant, Antoine Hoole, and Michael Bourrassa, to select a few smart lads and horses, to escort a supply of provisions in carts, and in a canoe down the river; and which they were to convey as far as twelve miles or more, below the Colony.

On the morning of the 18th of June the party got ready, and fifteen bags of pemican, part for themselves, and the remainder for the people below, were given them in charge. The party at first consisted of between twenty and thirty men; but a number more followed, from the fears that prevailed for their safety, some with leave, and others without, so that the number escorting the provisions was about fifty men and boys.

Cuthbert Grant, Antoine Hoole, Michael Bourrassa, and all who were sent on this duty, were under the following injunctions and commands from me, which they received on their departure on the morning of the 18th June, viz.

To proceed with the provisions down Red River, and that those who were on horseback

should, as often as possible, accompany, and encamp with the canoe in which they were embarked ; that on their arrival at Passage, a place on the Assiniboine River, nine or ten English miles above the Settlement and Garrisons at the Forks of Red River, they should land, and unload the canoe, secrete it in the woods, and put the pemican into two carts sent for that purpose, with which they were directed to proceed in an orderly and peaceable manner, avoiding, if possible, being discovered or seen by the Hudson's Bay people and Settlers; to keep at as great a distance as possible from Forts Gibraltar and Douglas; to avoid the Settlement in like manner, and upon no account to molest any of the Settlers. They were further directed to leave a few people ten miles higher up than the Forks, who were to bring early intelligence to me of any meditated attack by Semple upon us at Portage des Prairies. On reaching Frog-plain, five miles below Fort Douglas, they were to gain all the intelligence they could from the Canadian free-hunters and others supposed to be there, regarding the North-West Company's canoes in Lake Winnipic, and afterwards, if the canoes had not made their appearance, to encamp at a place called the Press, distant at least fifteen miles below the Settlement, and to remain there and wait their arrival, of which they were to send me immediate notice. They were

further told, to be particular in ascertaining whether the navigation of the river was actually blocked up, as reported, by armed parties of the Hudson's Bay people, and to transmit to me exact information of what was passing.

It would, at this time, be superfluous to give any detail of the unfortunate and much to be lamented conflict which took place, on the evening of the 19th of June, and which originated in the unprovoked, and unlooked-for attack upon Cuthbert Grant and his people, by Mr. Semple and his followers. His Majesty's Commissioner, who lately visited the Red River, has ascertained by his enquiries and examinations, who were the aggressors and assailants on that deplorable occasion.

Upon the whole, we find that the Brulés, after the defeat of the party who attacked them, when the heat of passion, and the conflict was over, and after the feelings so naturally excited by the whole conduct of their assailants, and particularly on this occasion, had subsided;—we find, I say, that their conduct was marked with humanity and generosity. In no instance did they hurt a single individual who had not joined in the attack, and instead, as they have been unjustly accused, of preventing the burial of the unfortunate dead, which did not appear to give much concern to the Hudson's Bay people at Fort Douglas, they were instrumental in getting

the bodies collected and interred. Of those who fell in the affray, Mr. Alexander M'Lean, and Mr. White (whose wife was in Europe) were the only married men.

The first intelligence which reached us of the affair, was brought by a lad of the name of André Trottier, whose brother had been dangerously wounded in the conflict: he left the Forks without any instructions, and was on his way to inform his parents, then at River la Souris, and bring them down to take care of his brother. He gave us a distinct account of all that had occurred, stating the wanton and unprovoked manner in which the party had been attacked, the result of the affray, the number of killed, wounded, &c. on both sides, and the preparations which were then making by the Colonists to depart. I met him some distance from the encampment, and walked on with him to the fort, where the men crowded round to learn the news from below, and I repeated to them all the information I had received from Trottier, and probably stated the loss of the Hudson's Bay people to be twenty-two; and it is not unlikely, that some persons standing near me, might, from the unexpected tidings they had heard, exclaim, "*Sacré nom d'a Dieu, vingt deux des Anglois de tués.*"

I dispatched a messenger immediately, to direct Grant to detain the Settlers, not with a

view that all should hereafter be wantonly butchered, but that I might personally be assured, whether their departure was voluntary or not, and that I might have an opportunity of enquiring into the conduct of our people who had been engaged in these melancholy transactions. I had also a sincere desire to afford every assistance and comfort in my power to the unfortunate Colonists, who had been reduced to such a miserable situation through the blind infatuation of their late Commander. The only persons whom I wished to detain on other accounts, were two noted felons, J. B. Bourke and M. Heyden, whom it was essential should be delivered over to the hands of justice. What occasioned the departure both of the Settlers and Hudson's Bay people before my arrival, I cannot say; but all who know Cuthbert Grant, will do him the justice to acknowledge, that his word, once pledged to friend or foe, is considered sacred.

Having endeavoured to describe the conduct of the Agents, Governors, and dependants of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Earl of Selkirk in Red River, from the arrival of Miles M'Donell in 1812, till spring 1816, and the part it fell to my lot to act in these transactions, and having, I hope, proved by a plain narrative of what actually occurred, that our opponents were on all occasions the aggressors and assailants, and responsible for the consequences of their outrages,

and for the blood which was shed, I shall forbear entering into further details on the subject, and am only anxious to state in addition, some facts which are within my knowledge, relative to a subsequent tragical event.

While on my passage, in August 1816, from Lake Superior to Bas de la Riviere, I very unexpectedly met Mr. Owen Keveny, of the Hudson's Bay Company, a prisoner under a warrant from Mr. Archibald N. McLeod, then a Justice of the Peace for the Indian Territories. I had formerly been well acquainted with the prisoner, when he first arrived with some Emigrants from Europe in fall 1812, and I was forcibly struck with pity towards him in his present situation. I therefore enquired of those conducting him, the cause of his being in irons, and was informed that it originated from his violent and outrageous conduct, and the frequent attempts he made to upset the canoe. They represented his conduct, ever since his arrest, to have been highly unruly, and almost bordering on madness, and that therefore his being in irons, was a measure indispensably necessary for safety. I went to Mr. Keveny, who was then walking backwards and forwards on a rock, apparently in a passion, and addressed him in the language of intimacy and compassion: for a time, Keveny made none but acrimonious returns to my civility, and reproaches against other

individuals not present ; but knowing him of old, to be of a violent temper, and making all allowances for his feelings in his present situation, I only begged him to be calm, and to permit me to take off the irons he had on his wrists. He then asked me, in a cool manner, " Whether I would take off the irons as a Partner of the North-West Company, or as a friend ? " Upon which I told him, that I had nothing to do with the transaction, nor had the North-West Company; that the Hudson Bay servants were his accusers, and that Mr. A. N. McLeod was only doing his duty as a Magistrate, in forwarding him to justice, where he also could claim redress, if he thought there was any thing illegal in the proceedings against him. He at length became pacified, and allowed me to take his handcuffs off. We then entered into familiar conversation, and both expressed our regret at the existing disturbances and contests between the two concerns. Mr. Keveny observed, indeed with justice, that as parties on both sides would unavoidably be subject to arrests, and their actions to investigation in Courts of Justice, a suitable line of conduct, according to the rank of individuals, ought to be universally observed, as the seizures, &c. of the Hudson's Bay Company were in consequence of a reliance on their supposed legal rights, and resisted by the North-West

Company, under a conviction that no such rights existed to warrant these measures ; so that nothing, in reality, criminal or ignominious, could attach to the conduct of either party. After breakfasting together, Mr. Keveny told me he had a favour to beg of me ; and on my saying that it should be granted, if within my power, he requested that I would change his conductors, who were five Half-breeds, and, instead of them, send two or more of the Canadians who were in my canoe, to conduct him to Lac la Pluie. To this I readily agreed, and two young fellows (one of whom spoke English), and an Indian lad to guide them, were ordered to proceed with Mr. Keveny to Lac la Pluie, and to be particularly attentive to him on the voyage.

My regard for Keveny made me think of another expedient to relieve his mind ; and I wrote a Letter to the Proprietors of the North-West Company, earnestly entreating them to receive and use Mr. Keveny as a Gentleman in every respect ; and further, to furnish him with any articles of clothing he might require, and place the amount to my account, as well as any other necessaries which the stores at any of the Company's depôts could afford. This letter was delivered to him open, in order that he might make use of it at the different posts on his route ; and after thus receiving every relief and assistance



in my power to afford, he was supplied with provisions and other necessaries, and proceeded on his voyage.

I had met Mr. Keveny and his conductors about eleven o'clock, A. M.; and when we parted the sun was nearly set. My last commands to the two Canadians who conducted him, were, to be as expeditious as possible, to be particularly attentive to Mr. Keveny during the voyage, and to return to Red River with Mr. Hugh M'Gillis, then expected with the canoes and outfit for that department.

I pursued my voyage to the Forks of the Red River, and a few days after my arrival there, received letters from Mr. Archibald M'Lellan, whom I had left at Bas de la Riviere Winnipic, and Mr. John Stuart, who had arrived from Fort William, he and Mr. Thomson having, fortunately for themselves, set out from thence before Lord Selkirk's arrival, and having heard of his Lordship's proceedings there, from one of the guides who had made his escape and followed them in a small canoe. These letters apprized me of the arrest of the Agents and Partners of the North-West Company, *en masse*, at Fort William, of the capture and pillage of that depôt, and the seizure of all the property it contained, including the expected supplies for Red River, and the other departments in the vicinity of Lake Winnipic. They further stated the pro-

bability, that this blow was intended to be followed up by the seizure, in like manner, of all the Company's Trading Establishments throughout the interior, and urged me to assemble all the force I could muster, to aid in the defence of our post at Bas de la Riviere.—I accordingly collected a small party of Bois Brulés and Indians, with whom I arrived at Bas de la Riviere in the evening of the 4th of September; and on inquiring if they had any tidings of Mr. Keveny, and the men whom I had given him as conductors, I learned that Messrs. Thomson and Stuart, having met them three or four days after I had parted with them, had, in consequence of the events at Fort William, stopped them from proceeding to Lac la Pluie, and directed them to return to Bas de la Riviere, where they had not yet arrived. From this delay in their arrival, and the known disposition of Mr. Keveny, some surmises were entertained, that he might have seduced the two Canadians from their duty, and persuaded them to convey him to Albany Factory, on Hudson's Bay; and that, in the event of the young Indian attempting to resist such a plan, he might have been killed, or turned adrift, without a canoe or other means of escape, so that his father, who was then at Bas de la Riviere, had almost given up hopes of ever seeing him alive.

In consequence of the state of painful anxiety in which we were placed, as to our prospects for

the winter, being, by the stoppage of our expected supplies, deprived entirely of the means of carrying on our trade, and nearly, indeed, of the means of obtaining subsistence, it was determined that Mr. M'Lellan should proceed towards Fort William, to learn, if possible, the true state of affairs; to enable us to judge what further danger we had to apprehend from Lord Selkirk and his band of desperadoes, and particularly to ascertain whether their robberies had yet extended as far as the Company's post at Lac la Pluie, from which, if still unplundered, we were in hopes of obtaining some small supplies.

Mr. M'Lellan accordingly set out in a light canoe on the 5th of September, and of his subsequent meeting and transactions with Mr. Keveny, I have no personal knowledge; but the result of his trial, on the charge of being accessory to the murder of that unfortunate man, and his acquittal, to the complete and entire satisfaction of the Court and the Public, afford the best refutation of the accusations so clamorously urged against him, and the best comment on the attempts made by means of misrepresentation, and even direct perjury, to criminate *him*, and through him, to fix a stain upon the Partners of the North-West Company.

THE END.



COLLECTION W. P. WITTON

4750."

